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June 1989  
47727

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# Wrestling

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WINS RIC FLAIR'S  
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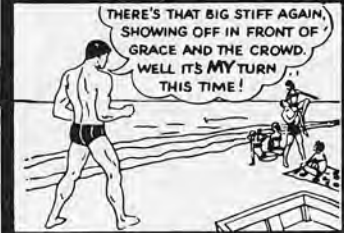
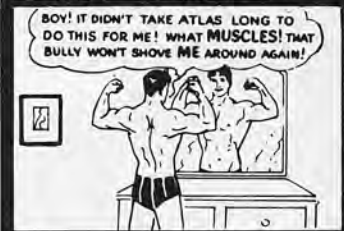
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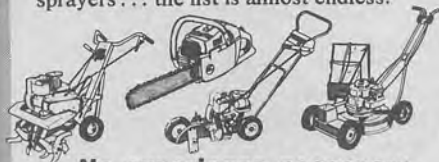
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INSIDE

# Wrestling

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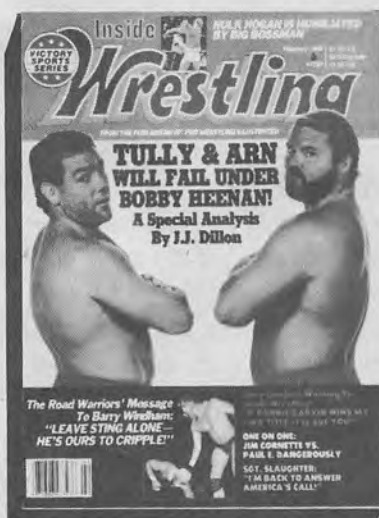


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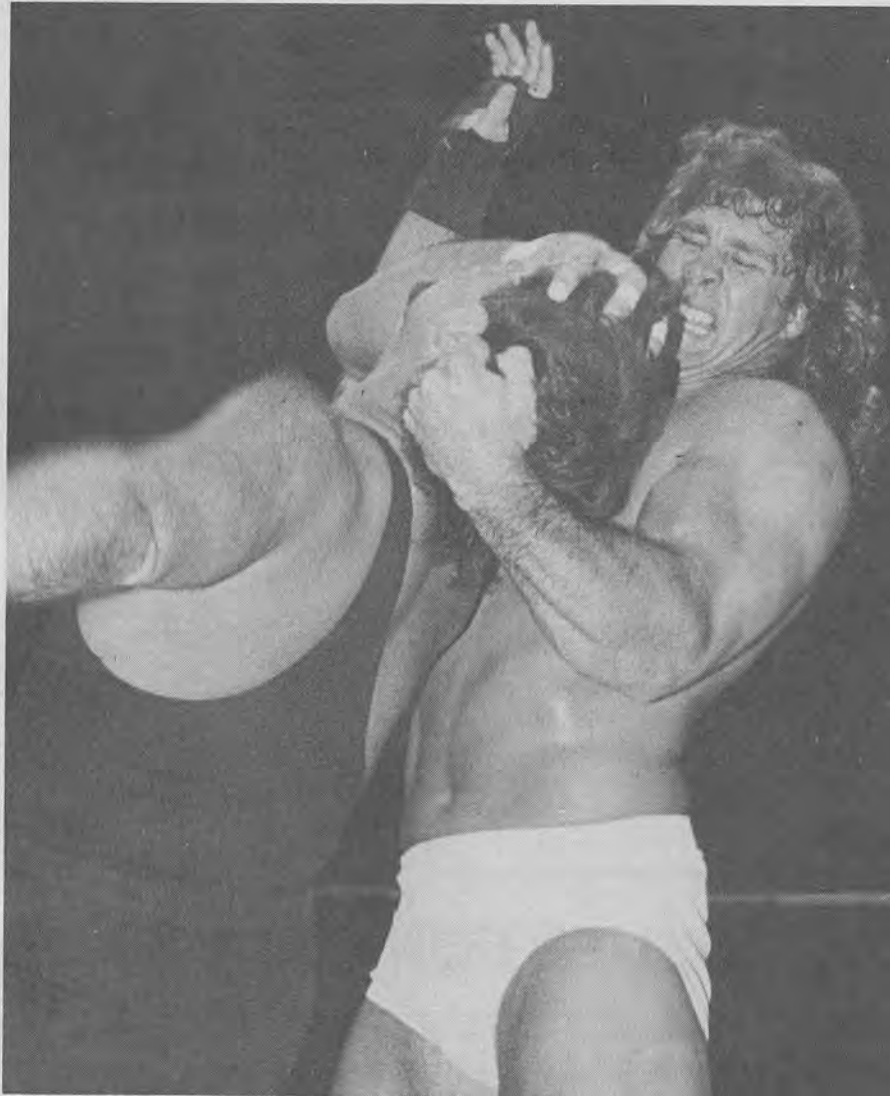
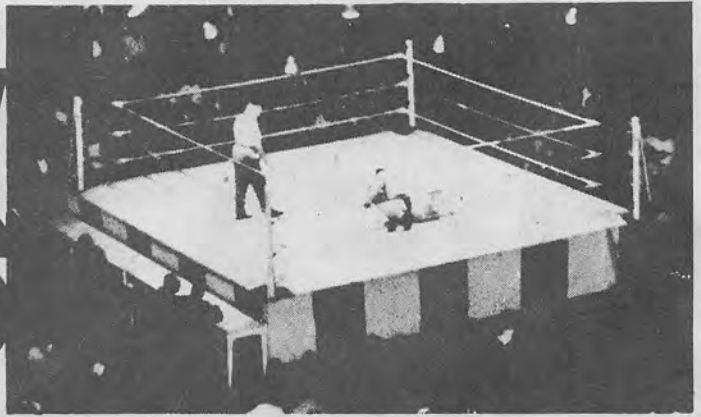
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SEND LETTERS TO:

# SINCERELY YOURS

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Kerry Von Erich slaps the claw on Jerry Lawler. They've battled many times for the AWA World and World Class titles. Even though Larry Zbyszko is now AWA champ, reader Andrew Kamen thinks Kerry should demand a title shot.

## HOT STUFF!

You really outdid yourselves with the fantastic special section ("Wrestling's Hottest Winter!") in your April 1989 issue. The four color pages featured some of the most vibrant color shots I've ever seen. It was just like being at ringside.

The thing I liked best about the issue was that most of wrestling's major champions came out of the matches with their titles intact—except for Kerry Von Erich, that is, who was robbed by the AWA in his quest for the World title. Even though Jerry Lawler has since been stripped of the title and

Larry Zbyszko is now the champion, Kerry cannot allow the officials to keep him away from the belt that should be his. He should petition AWA President Stanley Blackburn for a title match right away. He certainly earned another shot with his performance at SuperClash III!

Again, your magazine has proven to be the best anywhere. I can't wait for the next special issue!

ANDREW KAMEN  
Naco, AZ

## GARVIN GREED

I don't care if WWF fans have short memories. I don't care if he's feuding with Greg Valentine or not. Ronnie Garvin is nothing but a money-grubbing bum, and the "Hotseat" interview with him (April 1989) proves my point. This is one man who shouldn't be trusted.

All this guy cares about is cash! He sold out on Dusty Rhodes last year, and since then he's been floating around the wrestling world, breaking rules everywhere he goes. He cheated to win the AWA TV title and the Universal title in the World Wrestling Council only months before he decided to invade the WWF. Now, all of a sudden, we're supposed to believe in him as a fan favorite.

I'll have to admit, he suckered me in for a moment—until I read this interview. Garvin hasn't changed a bit. His goal isn't really winning titles. He just wants to win championships because of the large purses he receives from them. What scares me is that he teamed up with Hulk Hogan and Hacksaw Duggan for a six-man tag match recently.



Mark my words—Garvin will turn against them just like he did with his former partners in the NWA.

Ban Ronnie Garvin!

LARRY McANDREW  
Calgary, BC

## R 'n' R REBUTTALS

I am writing in response to the letter written by Diane Martin ("Rock 'n' Roll Lives") in the April 1989 issue. She is as wrong as wrong can be. The Rock 'n' Roll Express was nothing but a fluke team.

Their two victories over Ivan and Nikita Koloff for the NWA World tag team title were nothing but luck. Next, they beat The Midnight Express for the title, but the victory was all Jim Cornette's fault. And the only reason they beat Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez for the title was because Rude was preparing to go to the WWF, and he didn't really care anymore.

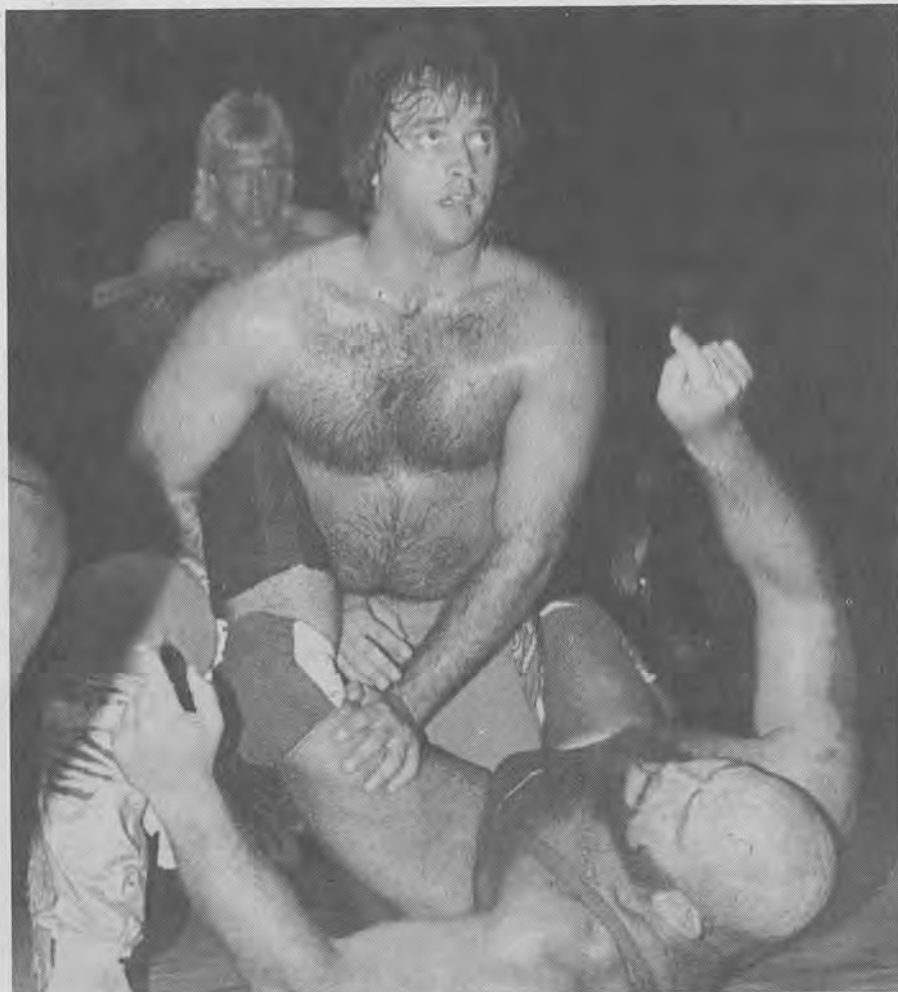
As for Martin's comments about the Express needing to stay together, I just had to laugh. Robert Gibson and Rick Morton stink whether they're a team or not. Isn't it time for these guys to call it quits?

JESS McGRATH  
Haddon Heights, NJ

I am writing in response to a letter by Diane Martin in the April 1989 issue. How could she possibly think The Rock 'n' Roll Express are wrestling better now than ever before? Do they have a world title? Do they even hold a regional title? Their years as a quality team are long over. I really think they should consider splitting up for good.

Let Rick Morton retire. Let Robert Gibson try to make something out of his life. The Rock 'n' Roll Express is finished—and they have been for a long time.

MIKE GOTSCHALL  
San Diego



Robert Gibson leglocks Ivan Koloff. Reader Jess McGrath writes that The Rock 'n' Roll Express were lucky to beat the Koloffs for the NWA World tag team title.



Sgt. Slaughter hiptosses The Iron Sheik. Reader Edgar Reynolds wishes the Sarge well in his war against foreigners.

## STOP THE FOREIGNERS

As a former member of the United States Marine Corps, I was shocked and dismayed about the plans The Iron Sheik, Col. DeBeers, and Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie have formulated for Sgt. Slaughter ("Iraq . . . Iran . . . South Africa: Sgt. Slaughter Under Siege!"), as reported in your April 1989 issue. I only wish there was some way I could assist Slaughter in his battles against these ruthless anti-American forces.

The only regret of my military career is that I did not have the chance to actively defend my country. Slaughter has that chance now, but I'm afraid he's going to need some help this time. Even the bravest American hero can be outmanned, and the beating he took at SuperClash III was brutal.

Perhaps it's time for Slaughter to enlist Pvt. Terry Daniels, whom he teamed with a few years ago, or maybe even Greg Gagne, who withstood the rigors of Camp Slaughter as a trainee. But Slaughter must not take on these three men alone. The fate of American wrestling hangs in the balance. He must not fail.

EDGAR REYNOLDS

Rib Lake, WI

(Continued on page 48)



# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Stu  
Saks

Editor-in-Chief

The sport of wrestling won't have Stanley "The Scapegoat" Blackburn to kick around anymore.

The man who has been known more for his controversial decisions than for his 37 years of service to the sport has announced his retirement as AWA president. Blackburn, who began in the sport as a member of the Texas Athletic Commission in 1952 (and still serves to this day) was president for 27 of the AWA's 29 years.

Aside from a lifetime ban on Bobby Heenan for a deliberate attack against him in 1975 (he lifted the ban after two years), Blackburn had a relatively calm presidency until making a string of unusual decisions beginning in 1981 when he awarded the World title to number-one contender Nick Bockwinkel upon Verne Gagne's retirement, and ending in February of this year when he allowed the vacant World title to be filled in a battle royal.

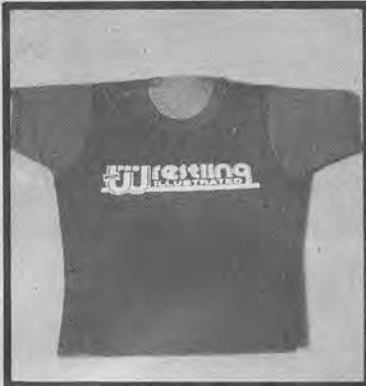
"I thought I was right at the time I made my decisions," he told me, "and I'm not about to second-guess myself at this point."

There is no use in Blackburn rehashing the bad memories when he has so many good ones. "I always get a kick out of thinking back to 1981 when I took a trip to Japan for 15 days. They treated me so well. I had a sciatic nerve problem and had trouble getting up out of certain chairs. Haku, who was then King Tonga, was assigned to follow me all over Japan. His sole job for the entire trip was to lift me out of chairs."

Though he is resigning his position as AWA president, Blackburn, at 72, still feels he has a lot to offer the sport and isn't ready to leave it. "I want to keep in touch in some way or another," he said. "You can't do something for a quarter-century and walk away and not give a damn."



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# TOP SECRET

## Behind the Dressing Room Door

by **David  
Rosenbaum**

**B**AM BAM BIGELOW has changed federations. What else is new?

May I be the first to proclaim that the 6'3", 368-pound tattooed giant with a world of talent no longer has a world of potential. Bam Bam Bigelow's potential is almost gone.

He has now officially gone full circle. He started out three years ago in the CWA, a regional federation that restricts itself to the mid-southeast portion of the country. He moved on, and up, to World Class, a federation that had a national cable contract and occasionally toured nationwide. So far so good.

Bigelow briefly returned to the CWA before gaining international attention in Japan. Still on the right track, he then made the big step to the WWF and was suddenly in the national spotlight. We all had it figured out: Bam Bam Bigelow would be on top of the wrestling world within a year.

It never happened. Bigelow got lost in the WWF shuffle and then decided to move to the NWA: good because he remained in the national spotlight, bad because he'd have to reestablish himself. But he quickly became the number-one contender for Barry Windham's U.S. title and was on the verge of becoming a major star when he left for a tour of Japan in January.

When he returned, Bigelow announced that he had signed with Florida Championship Wrestling—another regional promotion that runs shows exclusively in Florida.

Bam Bam Bigelow is back to square one.

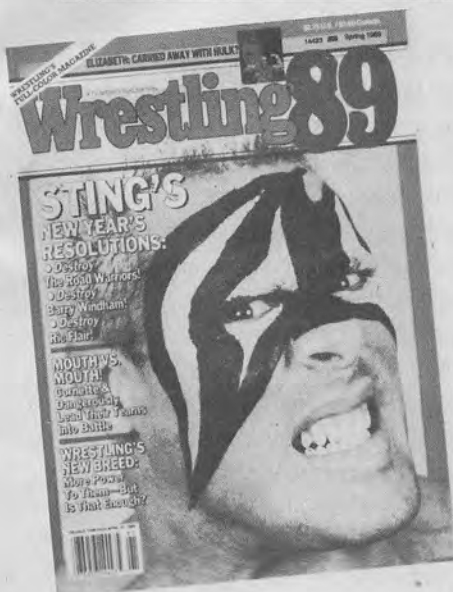
I've heard all of his excuses about not getting treated right, and they're all getting old. What

*(Continued on page 52)*



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THERE WEREN'T TEARS in his eyes. Not quite. But the tone of Bruno Sammartino's voice led me to believe that there was clearly a lot of sadness inside.

"I guess the phrase that comes to mind easiest is 'Frankenstein's monster,'" Bruno said, "I feel like I've created something that's gone out of control. You know, it all happened almost a decade ago, but it still seems like yesterday. I don't think about it often, but when I do it's like opening up the wounds all over again."

Bruno was referring, of course, to one of the most infamous attacks in wrestling history; perhaps *the* most infamous attack of all.



Bruno trains Larry Zbyszko

The time: 1980. Larry Zbyszko had been trained by Bruno, and wrestling had seldom seen a more willing protege. Zbyszko soaked up knowledge like a dry sponge, then thirsted for more. Sammartino gave him more. And when it came time for the student to test his skills against those of his mentor, Zbyszko surprisingly—and savagely—turned against Sammartino, igniting a feud that would allow Zbyszko to cruise comfortably to victory in the balloting for 1980's Most Hated Wrestler of the Year.

The time is now 1989, and Zbyszko is enjoying the fruits of his recently won AWA World heavyweight championship, a championship for which Sammartino has little respect.

"It's not the title-itself I disrespect," Bruno told me recently, "it's the fact that it's *Zbyszko* holding the title. I mean, let's face it, there have been some sensational athletes that have held the AWA World title. Verne Gagne, Fritz Von Erich, Nick Bockwinkel, Jumbo Tsuruta, Rick Martel . . . but Zbyszko? Doggone it, the man is just not world-champion material, I don't care what *anyone* says. He's no doggone good, from the skin to the core."

I played a tape of Zbyszko's battle royal victory for the World belt. From the start, Sammartino could barely believe his eyes.

"Look at this!" Sammartino nearly screamed as the match got underway. "This is despicable! He's just stand-

## ON THE ROAD

with  
CRAIG PETERS

ing there! Doing nothing! He's not wrestling, he's letting all the other wrestlers in the match do his dirty work, and he's staying out of the way of any kind of action at all. That's disgusting!"

Bruno switched off the VCR and stared at the blank screen for a moment. Somewhere, seemingly deep within the set itself, Bruno undoubtedly saw the events of a decade ago as the seeds of a championship harvest

the AWA is reaping today.

"I know that there's nothing I could have done differently," Bruno said. "I know that a lot of water has gone under the bridge since then, that a lot of events have happened to make Larry the person that he is. But it's just plain disgusting to think that the man I trained to be an honorable competitor has turned into such scum. It hurt me back then, and it hurts me even more today to see that his slimy ways have brought him a world title."

"Sammartino was a crybaby 10 years ago, and he's even worse today," Zbyszko responded when I relayed Bruno's comments to him. "He should be the one to talk about being worthy of a title. His first WWF reign, when he won the belt in—what was it, 48 seconds? Right. I'm sure Buddy Rogers was in *great* shape for *that* match. I've heard that Rogers was in the hospital about a week before that match recovering from a heart attack. At least I was in the ring with 18 of the sport's toughest competitors."

What about the allegations of staying out of the match for the early minutes?

"Of course, what do you expect me to do?" Zbyszko responded. "That's the most basic strategy of the sport. Any half-decent competitor would know enough not to tire himself out in the opening minutes of a battle royal. It's common sense, plain and simple."

"Look, Bruno taught me a lot, but those were just the basics. I've gone so far beyond the level that Bruno brought me to, it's not even funny. Sure, I hear what he says about me, and I can understand where he's coming from: He's a jealous, bitter old man, no longer competing, sour because he knows that on my worst day I'm twice as good as he *ever* was. It's sad to see a man who thought so highly of himself fade into obscurity, but that's what's happening with Bruno. Sure, he was good in his day, but his day wasn't very special, and by today's standards he wasn't really that good at all."

"Zbyszko is nothing but a loudmouthed punk," Bruno said. "He thinks he's so hot? Let's see him hold his belt for 11 years, then he can come back and discuss what being a worthy world champion is all about. Until then, he's nothing but a load of hot air." □



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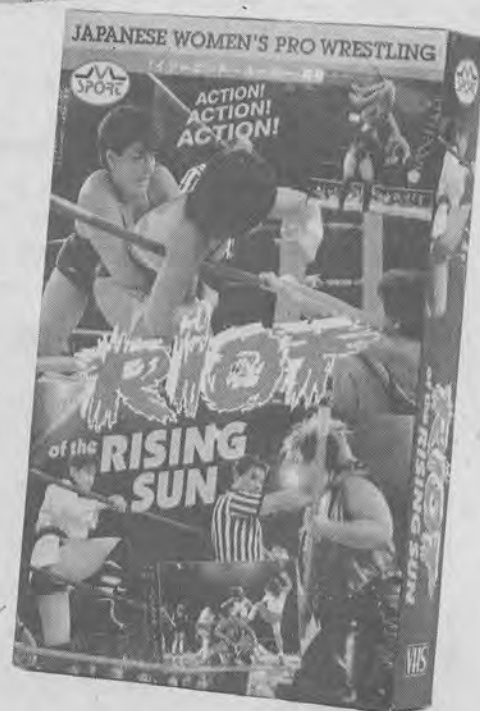
(running time: approximately 70 minutes)

- Wendi Richter & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Okumura
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## Riot Of The Rising Sun

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- Yukari Omori & Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori vs. Noriyo Tateno & Itysuki Yamasaki—"The Jumping Bomb Angels"
- Masked You & Kaoru "Dump" Matsumoto vs. Lioness Asuka & Chigusa Nagayo—"The Crush Girls"
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# NAMES MAKING

**C**HI-TOWN RUMBLE, the supercard held at Chicago's UIC Pavilion on February 20, is destined to go down in history as one of the greatest NWA events of all time. Three major titles changed hands as **Rick Steamboat** upset **Ric Flair** for the NWA World championship (see related story on page 34); **Lex Luger** downed **Barry Windham** for the U.S. title (see



**RICK STEAMBOAT**

"Hotseat" interview with Luger on page 38); and **Mike Rotundo** regained the NWA TV belt from **Rick Steiner**.

Steamboat responded to his stunning victory by announcing that he would grant Flair a series of rematches. The first one was scheduled for March 18 at the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland.

"I despise Flair and everything he stands for," said Steamboat after catching Flair in a small package for the victory at 23:06, "but he took his loss like a man, without complaining. He's a great wrestler, and if nothing else, he deserves a rematch as soon as possible."

Other matches saw **Sting** pin **Butch Reed**, **The Road Warriors** defeat **Kevin Sullivan** and **Steve Williams** when **Hawk** pinned Sulli-



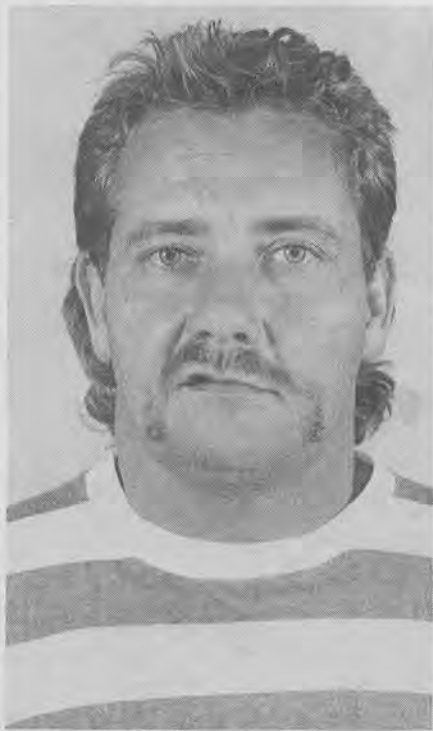
**RANDY ROSE VS. STAN LANE**

van, and **Jim Cornette's Midnight Express** down **Paul E. Dangerously**, **Randy Rose**, and **Jack Victory** (substituting for **Dennis Condrey**) in a six-man tag team match where the man pinned—Rose—was forced to leave the NWA.

"Randy knew what he was getting into when we signed for this match," said a callous Dangerously afterward. "He got pinned, so now he's history. I have no time for losers." Dangerously has rebounded from the loss by signing former World Class tag team champions **Samu** and **Fatu**, **The Samoan Swat Team**, to an exclusive contract. Other NWA newcomers include **Dan Spivey**, who has joined Sullivan's **Varsity Club**, and **The Iron Sheik**, most recently seen in the AWA.

At press time, the WWF was gearing up for **WrestleMania V**, their annual supercard, scheduled for April 2 at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City. But the

biggest rumor in the federation concerns **Elizabeth**, the manager of the former Megapowers, **Randy Savage** and **Hulk Hogan**. Word from WWF sources claimed that the lovely manager has tired of being in the middle of the Hogan-Savage war, and is looking to leave the sport as soon as possible. The WWF, however, is currently working on a new perfume to be marketed under Elizabeth's name. I don't see how the venture could possibly be successful if she decided to retire.



**JIMMY GOLDEN**

**Robert Fuller** and **Jimmy Golden** are now double tag team champions! The rulebreaking duo won the World Class tag team title from **Kevin** and **Kerry Von Erich** on February 17—thanks mainly to World Class' disqualification rule. Kevin had pinned Golden for the loss, but Golden stuffed a foreign object into Kevin's trunks. Golden pointed the object out to the referee, who immediately disqualified the Von Erichs. Under World Class



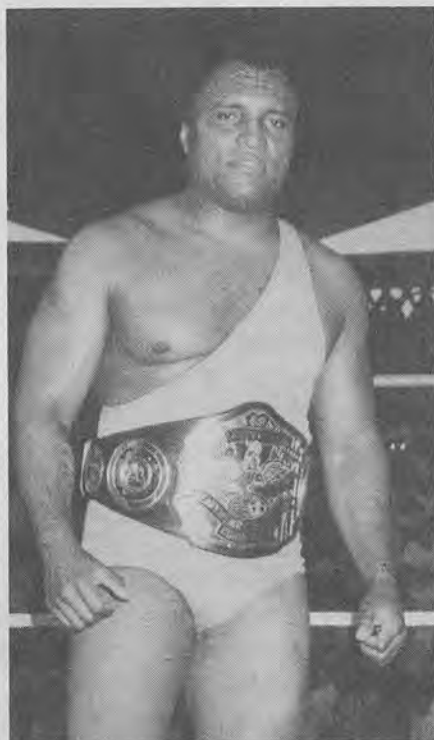
# N' NEWS

Bill Apter  
reporting...

rules, any team losing on a DQ must forfeit their title. Eight days later, Fuller and Golden won the CWA tag team title from **Jed Grundy** and **Scott Steiner**.

"What a blatant rip-off!" complained Kevin after the match. "Hopefully, when World Class officials see the tape of this match, they'll change their decision. If they don't, Kerry and I are going to challenge Fuller and Golden to a double-title match—winner take all."

**Col. DeBeers** has been one of the busiest men in wrestling during the past few weeks. The South African mercenary continues to battle **Sgt. Slaughter** in the AWA, and he's started another feud with **Ken Patera** in the Windy City territory. Plus, DeBeers has also been challenging **Chief Jules Strongbow** for the NWF title ... **Carlos Colon** won the WWC TV title from **Jason the Terrible** in a bloody barbed-wire match on March 1 in Car-



CARLOS COLON



LARRY CAMERON

olina, Puerto Rico. Colon also holds the WWC Universal title ... **Bobby Jagers** has left the WWC to form a new team with **Black Bart** called **Southern Force** in the Florida Championship area.

Massive **Larry Cameron** has started a violent feud with **Davey Boy Smith**, half of **The British Bulldogs**, in the Stampede area. Cameron claims that Smith gets preferential treatment in the federation because Smith is the son-in-law of promoter **Stu Hart**.

"This is the most sickening situation I've ever seen," griped Cameron. "Too many people around here get all the title bouts because they're related to the matchmakers. Well, I'm not gonna put up with this garbage. I'm gonna cripple Smith for stealing title matches that I've worked hard to earn."

Just two days after his brother won the NWA World title, **Vic Steamboat** won a \$20,000 battle royal at Kutsher's Country Club in New York's Catskill mountains ... **The Fantastics** have left the NWA ...

**Johnathan Holliday**, last seen in the CWF, is challenging **Leo Burke** for the IWA title in Canada.

This just in—**Eddie Gilbert** and **Rick Steiner** are the new NWA U.S. tag team champions! The popular duo, who are being seconded by **Missy Hyatt**, defeated **Steve Williams** and **Kevin Sullivan** for the title on February 28 in Columbia, South Carolina. The upset came when Sullivan grabbed for Hyatt, who was standing near the ring, but Gilbert rolled up Sullivan for the surprise victory.



MILDRED BURKE

On a sad note, **Mildred Burke**, long acknowledged as the greatest female wrestler of all time, died on February 18 at the age of 73 at a Northridge, California, hospital. Burke was the world women's wrestling champion from 1935 to 1954, and at one point wrestled in more than 5,000 matches without losing a single one. This legend truly set the standard for all female wrestlers who followed her, and she will be sorely missed.

That's all for now, fans. See you at the matches! □

THE

# INSIDER

By Eddie Ellner

*[The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.]*

IT WAS A dream gig, even by my impossible standards. Accompany Ric Flair on his rounds the week prior to his title tilt against Rickety Steamboat. Though Flair had lately drawn my wrath for his lethargic and inconsistent ring behavior, he remained top shelf through the exercise of his incomparable style.

*Style.* It was the word that would haunt me throughout the week I spent in the champ's circle. Critics from me on down have accused Flair of embracing style over substance, although the results—NWA champion for most of the 1980s—speak otherwise. There was no denying, however, that Flair had filled the past year with tepid, mediocre title defenses in which the champ clung to his crown by the barest of threads. Because of the long layoff, I didn't give Rickety Steamboat much chance to defeat even a lethargic Flair. It wasn't long before I discovered, with mild shock, that Ric Flair thought differently.

●  
"I need shoes, dammit."

Four days before his match, Flair stares in rapt contemplation of his shoe closet. He is not happy. "This won't do at all. I'm tired of these old skips. I need some shoes!"



It doesn't take much to set Ric Flair off. Eddie Ellner discovered that during a stay at Flair's home, when the ex-champion decided to fly 3,000 miles to buy a pair of shoes, even though he has more than 200 in his closet.

Flair picks up his phone and presses a button. Within seconds, Lola appears at the bedroom door. "How can I be of service, Mr. Flair?"

"I need shoes, Lola. Get Tangerine to pull the car up, and call Denise. We'll need the jet checked out. We're going to L.A."

"Yes, sir."

Flair runs his household and all-female staff with the precision of an Egyptian slave driver. "Get your recorder, scribe," he says to me. "We're taking a little trip."

While Flair is in the bathroom (if

a room containing a 12-foot Jacuzzi, a sauna, steam room, massage board, and cold pool can be called a bathroom), I sneak a peek into his desolate shoe closet. Lined up like sardines are at least 200 pairs of shoes in every conceivable style and make. Some have obviously never been worn. I examine one pair of alligator boots that will probably never see Ric Flair's feet. I've seen the same ones in a store; they cost \$1,500. I place them neatly back in the closet. I

(Continued on page 56)



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# A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER



The Steamboats are a close-knit family, as Liz Hunter discovered during a stay at their home. She met the wife and child that gave "The Dragon" the inspiration for his NWA World title victory over Ric Flair, whose values Steamboat deploras.

**I** ADMIT IT, I hedged. I had grave misgivings when the editors first suggested the idea of living with the Steamboats for a few days prior to Rick's NWA title match against Ric Flair. I had just painfully ended a two-year relationship with a man whom I had mistaken for husband material. It was an agonizingly long, protracted break-up, the kind that reduces your spinal column to Jell-o. The last thing I needed was to spend valuable mourning time

with the Steamboats in the land of marital bliss.

"Perhaps I'm not making myself clear, Liz," Managing Editor Craig Peters implored. "This is not a suggestion, this is a *directive*. Get your tush on the next flight to North Carolina." Never mind my biological clock was ticking so loud the neighbors were complaining. Like a professional, I packed my luggage and swallowed my personal life. Again.

The Steamboat home in subur-

ban Charlotte seems lifted from the pages of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. There is a dog and child, a fenced-in yard, and a woodpile for the two fireplaces. And inside, everything is equally perfect. Rick and his wife, Bonnie, are as close to flawless as humanly possible. It's not enough to say Bonnie is simply beautiful, since charm and grace count for more than good looks. But take my word for it, guys, she's *beautiful*.

Rick is the perfect match for her. He possesses the face and body to inspire poets, and he is the consummate husband and father. During my visit to Charlotte, Steamboat rose each morning at 5:30 a.m., chopped wood for 30 minutes, fixed breakfast for his wife (and me on the two days I struggled out of bed before noon), jogged four miles around the neighborhood—greeting kids on their way to school—and returned home in time to play with the family's newest addition, his son Ricky.

"Probably the most important thing I've ever done in life is study martial arts," he told me one day as we drove to his gym. "It instills a perfect balance and symmetry to your entire life."

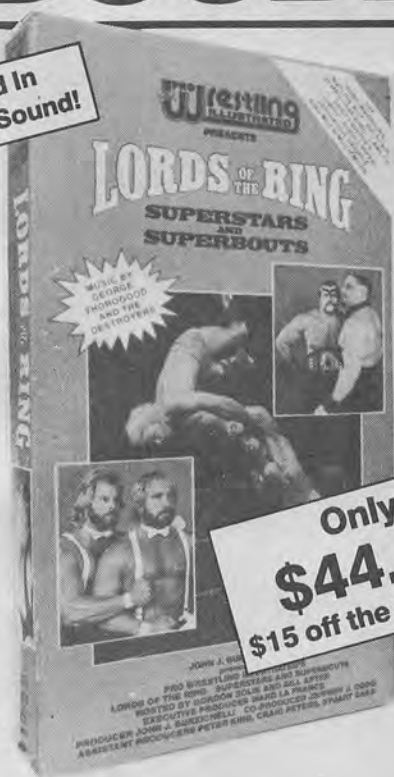
Balance is the essence of Steamboat's life. It is his fuel in the battle against an extremely unbalanced Ric Flair, who serves as an affront to Steamboat's entire value system. The flaunting of scantily clad women, the allusions to the jet set, and the party-at-all-

(Continued on page 60)



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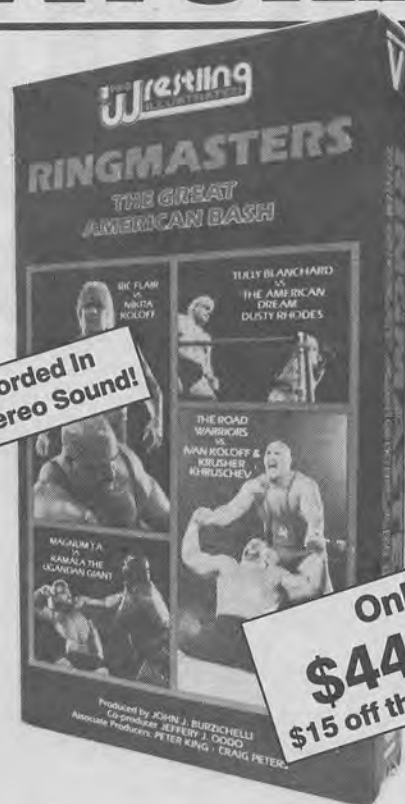
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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



## BLACK BART

The former World Class champion recently left the Continental area after several unsuccessful attempts to win the CWF title from Tom Prichard. Bart is now competing in the FCW area, where he has formed a new tag

team, Southern Force, with Bobby Jaggers. Bart claims his main goals are to take the FCW tag team title from Johnny Ace and The Terminator, and to end the career of his long-time enemy, Dusty Rhodes.



## SKY LOW LOW

The man who has long been known as the "Midget Lou Thesz" is still very much active. Although this 12-time midget champion refuses to reveal his age—we figure he's in his early 60s—he continues to amaze his fans by

competing for the ICW in the United States and Canada. He also continues to battle Little Louie in feud that's been going strong for most of the past decade. "I'm not gettin' older—I'm gettin' better," insists Sky.



## NORD THE BARBARIAN

After going undefeated on a tour of Japan, this vicious 316-pound rulebreaker returned to the Windy City area for a short time before moving on to the Pacific Northwest region, where he's been undefeated for several

weeks. His main goal is the PNW title currently held by The Grappler. "This time, I'm back to stay," insists the 6'6" former AWA and World Class star. "Defeating that Grappler slug should be a breeze."



## BUZZ SAWYER

This veteran rule-breaker now operates a wrestling school in California, and also is involved in securing contracts for the United States to promote a series of matches between Japan's IWGP wrestlers against competitors

from the Soviet Union. "Antonio Inoki challenged the Russians on behalf of the IWGP," said Sawyer. "The Russians will compete in Japan in April, and I want to bring some of these matches here for our fans."

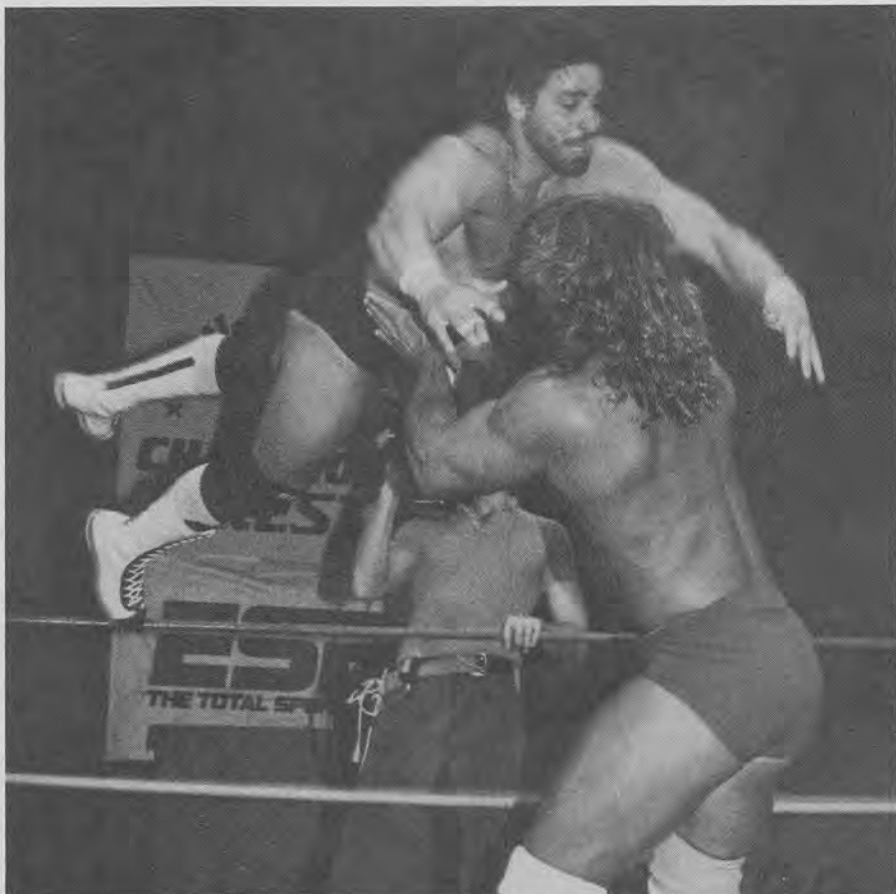


# INSIDE WRESTLING

155

## CAPSULE PROFILE

**A**L PEREZ IS one of a new breed of scientific rulebreakers (*"Scientific? All I care about is winning my matches"*) ... A high school wrestling champion, Perez was trained for the pros by Karl Gotch and Boris Malenko (*"They are both masters of the sport"*) ... Wrestled in Texas, Missouri, and Florida early in his career (*"I scored a lot of upsets over more experienced opponents"*) ... Captured his first title in 1985 when he won the Caribbean championship in the World Wrestling Council (*"To finally be called a champion was a tremendous feeling"*) ... His next stop was the Mid-South area, where he wrestled singly and teamed with Wendell Cooley (*"Wendell is a fine wrestler and a great competitor"*) ... Together they won the Mid-South tag team title from Steve Williams and Bob Sweetan on July 22, 1985, in Shreveport, Louisiana (*"We were the best champions that area ever had"*) ... Lost the belts to Eddie Gilbert and The Nightmare in New Orleans on November 11, 1985 (*"Five months was a long reign for that title"*) ... Parted ways with Cooley and returned to the WWF for several months (*"I had some business to take care of down there"*) ... Entered World Class late in 1986, took on Gary Hart as his manager, and turned to rulebreaking (*"It was time for me to get my priori-*

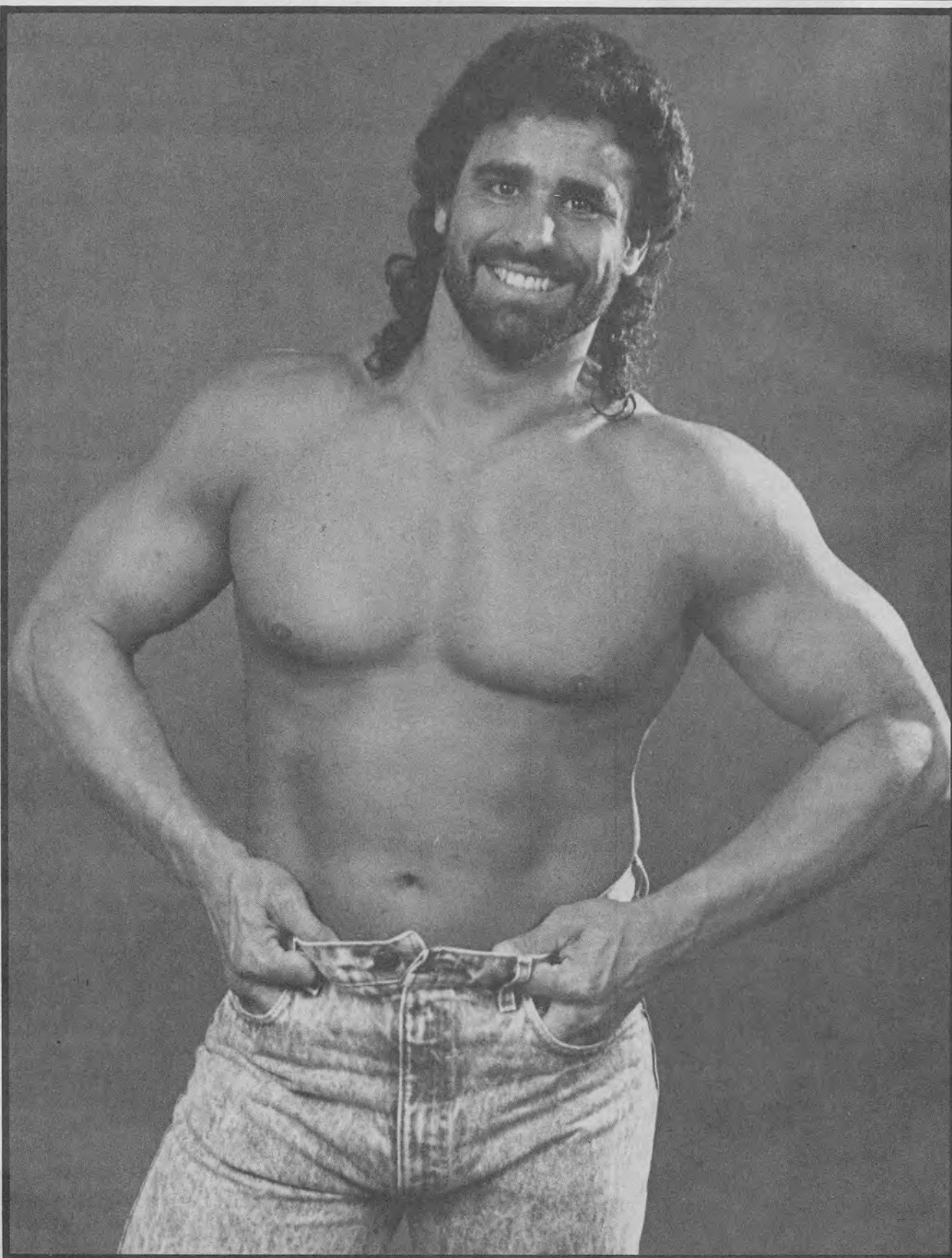


Al Perez leaps off the top rope, but he's caught by Kerry Von Erich. Perez, a former World Class champion who lost that title to Kerry, is now wrestling in Florida.

*ties straight"*) ... Scored an upset by defeating Dingo Warrior (now Ultimate Warrior) for the Texas title on June 21, 1987 (*"That overgrown musclehead was no match for my skills"*) ... Vacated the Texas title when he was awarded the World Class championship on August 21, 1987, after Kevin Von Erich was forced to forfeit the belt due to a ring injury (*"That's all bull; he was just too scared to wrestle me"*) ... In November 1987, Perez and Hart joined Vince Apollo's New Age Management (*"In theory it was a good idea, but it didn't last long"*) ... Voted first runner-up in the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* fan poll for 1987's Most Improved Wrestler of the Year (*"I wouldn't have accepted*

*the stupid award if I won"*) ... After a title reign loaded with controversy, lost the World Class belt to Kerry Von Erich on March 6, 1988, in Dallas (*"It's impossible to get a fair shake when you wrestle a Von Erich in Texas"*) ... Soon afterward, Perez and Hart left World Class for the NWA, where they were joined by Larry Zbyszko (*"Our target was Dusty Rhodes and his U.S. title"*) ... When Rhodes was stripped of the U.S. belt, Perez went after Nikita Koloff (*"Nikita wasn't as fearsome as he used to be"*) ... Was just beginning to get shots at Ric Flair's NWA World title when he left the NWA for Florida Championship Wrestling (*"This is it. Wherever I am is the place to be"*) □

## **CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP**



**AL PEREZ**



# BACK ISSUES OF



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## HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA By John Greeley



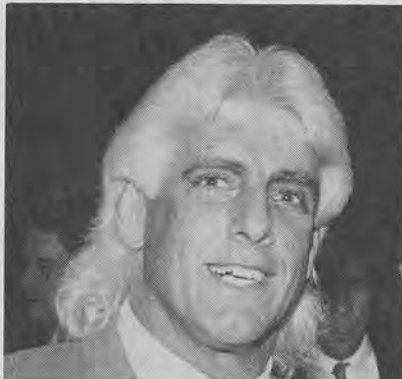
**BRET HART**  
vs.  
**THE HONKY TONK MAN**



These former stablemates tore into each other with the vengeance of two street-fighters. Hart controlled the match until Jimmy Hart hit Bret in the back with his megaphone. Honky Tonk then punished Bret with punching and kicking, but Bret fought back and soon gained the advantage. He was about to piledrive Honky when Jimmy leapt up on the ring apron. When Bret went after Jimmy, Honky Tonk snuck behind him and rolled him up for the pin.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Randy Savage defeated The Ultimate Warrior by countout ... Rick Martel pinned King Haku ... Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson beat The Rockers ... Brutus Beefcake pinned Ron Bass ... Paul Roma pinned Boris Zukhov.

## ATLANTA, GA By Steve Hendrix



**RIC FLAIR**  
vs.  
**STING**



Flair started to lose composure when the fans began chanting "Steamboat! Steamboat!" Sting took full advantage of Flair's state, controlling the pace of the match. After Hiro Matsuda used his karate on Sting, Flair began to tear into the young challenger. Sting recovered, clotheslined Flair, and covered him for the pin. Referee Teddy Long ordered the match to continue when he saw Flair's foot on the ropes. With his typical cheating, Flair then got the pin.

**OTHER BOUTS:** The Road Warriors beat Ivan Koloff & Eddie Gilbert ... Rick Steiner beat Kevin Sullivan ... Barry & Kendall Windham beat Eddie Gilbert & Steve Casey ... Stan Lane beat Russian Assassin I ... Mike Rotundo & Steve Williams beat Dick Murdoch & Michael Hayes ... Bobby Eaton beat Commando Ray.

## INDIANAPOLIS, IN By Niles Driskell



**RANDY SAVAGE**  
vs.  
**BAD NEWS BROWN**

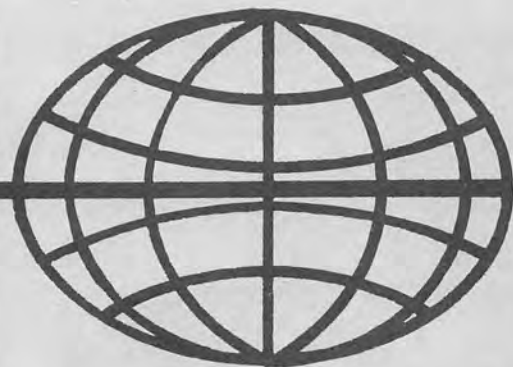


Savage attacked Brown before the bell and delivered a double-axhandle from the top rope. Brown bounced back with headbutts, elbows, and fists. He then grabbed the microphone and assaulted Savage verbally. Bad News took Savage down with a Russian legsweep and got a 2½-count. Savage battled back and went for his flying axhandle again, but Brown pulled the referee into the way. He was disqualified and Savage retained his belt.

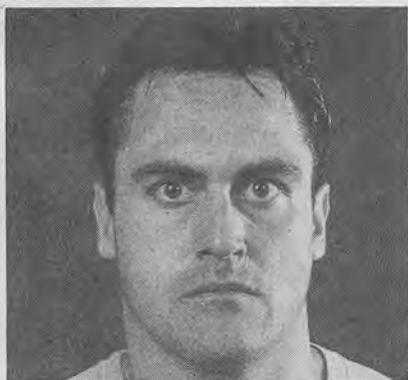
**OTHER BOUTS:** Steve Lombardi pinned Scott Casey ... Ron Bass pinned Tim Horner ... The Bushwhackers defeated The Bolsheviks ... Conquistador I pinned Tony Garea ... Big John Studd and Big Bossman were both counted out ... Hercules defeated Ted DiBiase.



# WRESTLING CAPITALS



## JOHNSON CITY, TN By Missy Morgan



**MIKE ROTUNDO  
vs.  
ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER**



Abdullah attacked Rotundo before the bell and hurled him through the ropes. After smashing the Syracuse alumnus into the timekeeper's table and the ringpost, the Butcher seemed in firm control. But Rotundo rallied, forcing Abdullah to resort to using a metal spoon. Rotundo seized the weapon, however, and used it to bloody the Sudanese madman, leading to a pinfall victory for the Varsity Club member.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Sting & Eddie Gilbert defeated Ric Flair & Barry Windham ... The Road Warriors beat Kevin Sullivan & Steve Williams ... Michael Hayes & Junkyard Dog defeated the "Original" Midnight Express ... Ivan Koloff defeated Russian Assassin II ... Rick Steiner beat Russian Assassin I.

## WINNIPEG, ONTARIO By Roland Hakehounder



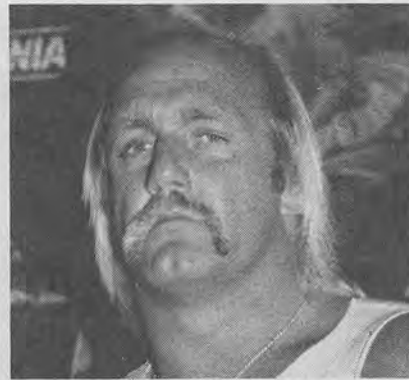
**WAHOO McDANIEL  
vs.  
MANNY FERNANDEZ**



AWA legend Verne Gagne was the special referee for this cage match that took the McDaniel-Fernandez war to new heights of violence. The match was short but packed with excitement. Verne became involved when Fernandez started mouthing off to him. Unable to contain his anger, Gagne whipped Fernandez hard into the turnbuckle and had him begging for mercy. Wahoo took advantage of Manny's humiliation and pinned him.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Derrick Dukes drew with Wayne Bloom ... Brad Rheingans pinned Mike Enos ... Col. DeBeers defeated Tom Zenk by DQ ... Greg Gagne pinned Larry Zbyszko ... Pat Tanaka & Paul Diamond defeated Mando & Hector Guerrero.

## ST. LOUIS, MO By Brian Hon



**HULK HOGAN  
vs.  
BIG BOSSMAN**



In this steel cage encounter after the Hogan-Savage breakup, the "Hulkster" was accompanied to the ring by Elizabeth. After tearing his shirt off, Hulk began the match furiously, bouncing Bossman from corner to corner. Later in the match, Savage ran out and forced Elizabeth back to the dressing room. As Hogan and Savage exchanged heated words, Bossman attacked Hogan from behind. Eventually, Hogan rallied and climbed over the top of the cage to win.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Ronnie Garvin pinned Boris Zukhov ... Honky Tonk Man and Bret Hart were both counted out ... Brutus Beefcake beat Rick Rude ... Curt Hennig drew with Hercules ... Randy Savage pinned Bad News Brown ... The Bushwhackers beat Jacques & Raymond Rougeau.



# Matt Brock's **PLAIN SPEAKING**

**CHICAGO, IL:** Rick Steamboat and Ric Flair went head-to-head here on February 20, and by the time it was done, Steamboat had the NWA World championship belt around his waist and most of the crowd wondering where they could get their tickets for the rematch. There have been some great wrestling matches in this town, but this one topped them all. Last month, I wrote that the biggest story of the year—Steamboat coming out of retirement to wrestle Flair—had already been written. Well, as of February, the Match of the Year has already been fought. Steamboat came out of the chute like his son's life was on the line, and Flair stopped strutting in a



hurry. I don't think I've ever seen Flair spend so much time *outside* the ring; Steamboat was *that* fired up. Anyway, the entire match lasted about 23 minutes, and just try to tell me that there's been a better 23 minutes of NWA wrestling in the last five years. No way. Once things got heated up, these two guys showed everything in their repertoires. Flair's always getting criticized—and deservedly so—for purposely getting disqualified to save his title, but this time he just went at it. Is he the best technical wrestler of our time? Absolutely. But Steamboat was the hungrier man. If you ask me, that was the entire difference. Steamboat had this fire in his eye, something I wasn't sure he could regain. After all, what the heck is the guy doing bringing his wife and kid to the ring? This is wrestling, not a day care center, and his wife looked like she was dressed for some cocktail party. I go to wrestling matches to watch wrestling, and that's it. By the way, I don't buy what Steamboat's been saying about his son being his inspiration. Maybe a little, but he had all the inspiration he needed when he looked across the ring and saw Flair wearing something he never had. That's the NWA World championship belt, and now Steamboat has it. But don't expect Flair to take this lying down. We're looking at the NWA's feud of the decade.

**NEW YORK, NY:** Interesting thing. There's not a chance that Hulk Hogan-Randy Savage at WrestleMania V will match the Flair-Steamboat bout—unless all you're counting is personal intensity levels—but this thing is all anybody's talking about. Let's face it, the UIC Pavilion in Chicago had a bunch of empty seats for Flair-Steamboat, and I know a lot of people who couldn't even see the thing on pay-per-view because their cable company wasn't carrying it. But you'd better believe that the Atlantic City Convention Center is sold out for Savage-Hogan,

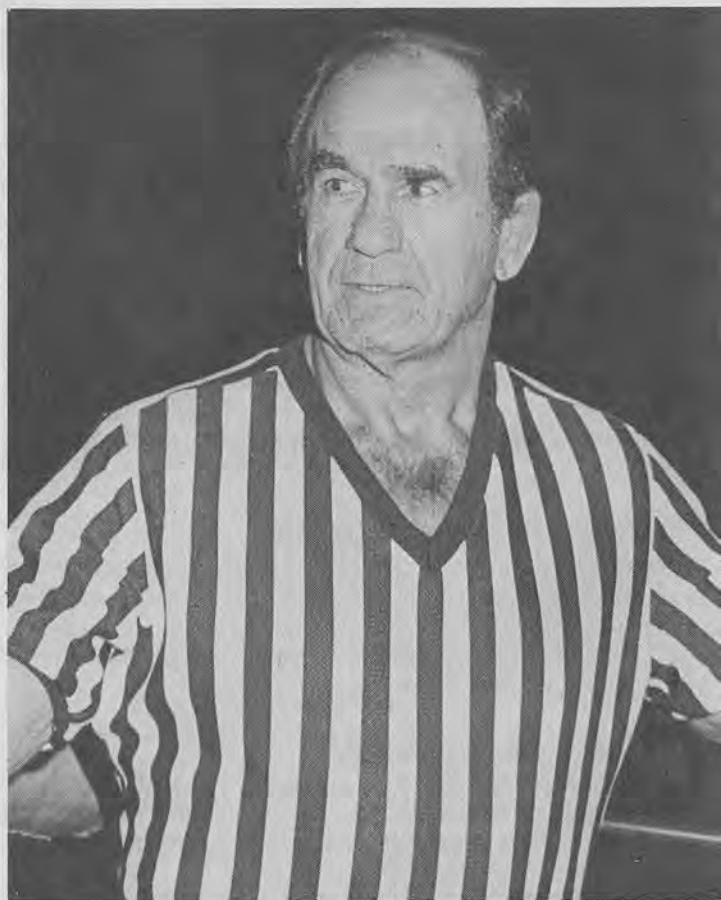
**RICK STEAMBOAT VS. RIC FLAIR**



## Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

and every wrestling fan in the country is gonna plunk down their \$24.95 to see it. By the way, did you notice how, once again, a female is getting in the way of two men getting down to business? I'm talking about Elizabeth, of course, and I have to agree with Jesse Ventura: She doesn't belong anywhere near a wrestling ring. If not for her, there's a good chance Savage and Hogan would still be friends; then, of course, we'd be without this match. Let me put it this way: Unless they're wrestling, women don't belong in the ring. I'm talking about managers, valets, mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers, *anyone*.

**LOS ANGELES, CA:** Well, at least one lady I knew had the kind of fortitude and determination that meant she truly belonged in the ring. She's Mildred Burke, and there's never been a gal as strong or one who could wrestle better. She was also quite a looker; I know quite a few men who went to the matches just to set their sights on her. Well, Mildred died here on February 18, and any woman who makes her living in the ring should have taken a few moments to pay their respects to her. If not for Mildred, there'd be no such thing as women's wrestling. She's the one who made it fashionable, and she did it the hard way: by proving herself against *men*. Incredibly, she held the women's world title from 1935 to 1954, and during the latter part of that reign there were a lot of women after her title. I was down in Atlanta the night she lost her title to June Byers, and let me tell you something: She was robbed. She lost the first fall, but in the second fall they went about an hour and couldn't reach a decision. Finally, they just stopped the damn thing and Mildred retained the belt, but about six months later they announced that the decision had been reversed and Byers was champion. What a ripoff! Byers, by the way, eventually lost the belt to Fabulous Moolah, who held it even longer than Burke. It was well-known that Moolah and Burke didn't like each other very much. But even Moolah would admit the debt she owes Burke. Every woman wrestler, and every fan of women's wrestling, should feel that debt.



LOU THESZ

**TOKYO, JAPAN:** Believe it or not (and I *still* don't believe it), that series between amateur wrestlers from Russia and American and Japanese professionals is a go. New Japan Wrestling Federation officials announced that the first matches would be held on April 24 at the 65,000-seat Korakuen Stadium (where I was last year for the Mike Tyson-Tony Tubbs heavyweight bout). They named Lou Thesz as special guest referee for the matches, and it looks like there'll also be some kick boxing on the card (a good opportunity to hit the bathroom and grab a hot dog, or whatever they serve in Japan). There's also word that ESPN will carry some of the matches, which would be a real treat for everyone. This promises to be one of the more interesting chapters in wrestling history. More next month. □



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The PWF:

# THE REBIRTH OF FLORIDA WRESTLING

Dusty Rhodes is about to pin U.S. Steel when Dick Slater interferes.



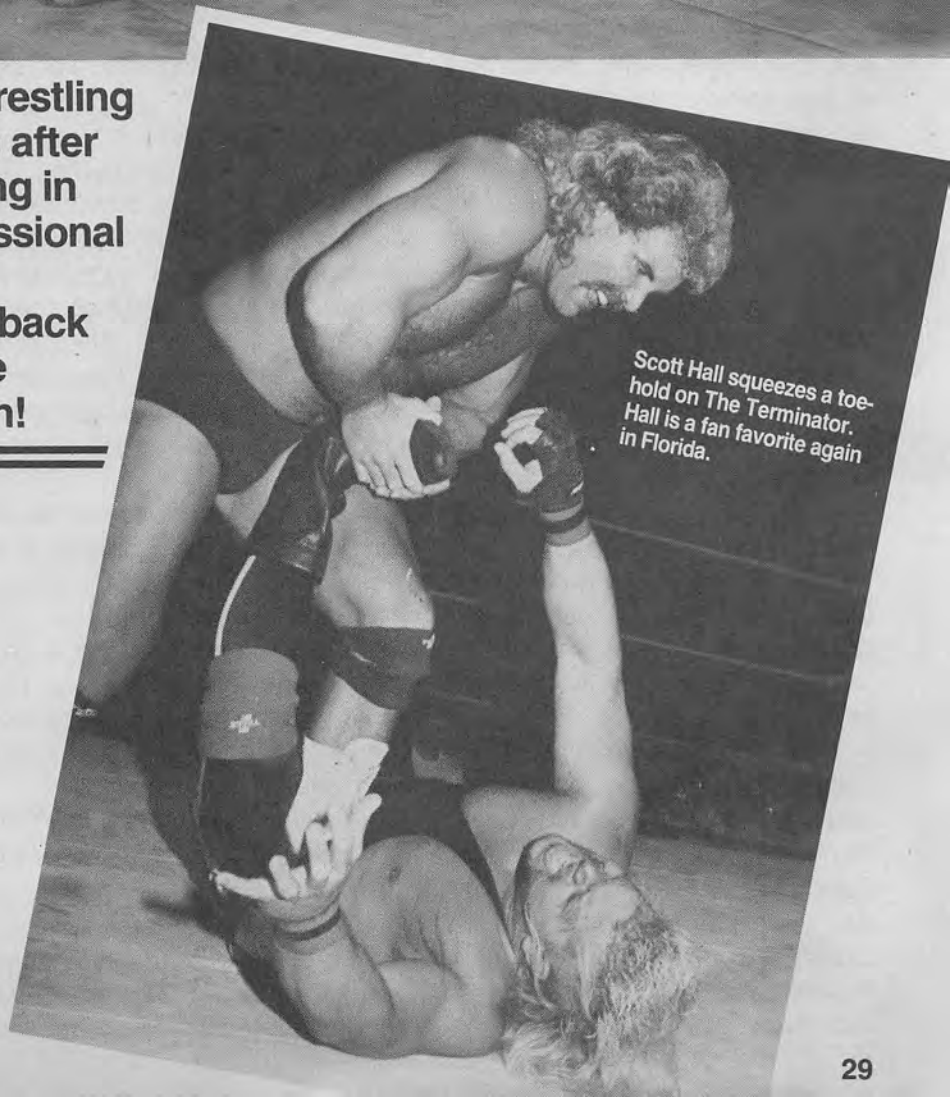
**In 1987, Championship Wrestling From Florida closed down after 40 years. But now wrestling in Florida is back! The Professional Wrestling Federation has imported top-name talent back to the area, heating up the Sunshine State once again!**

By Bill Apter

**T**HERE WAS A time when Dusty Rhodes and Gordon Solie were the most visible and well-known men in wrestling. Rhodes, who had a unique rapport with the fans, burst upon the national scene by winning two NWA World championships in the late 1970s and early '80s. Solie, with his distinctive voice and trustworthy style, earned the title "The Walter Cronkite of Wrestling."

Although Rhodes was a wrestler and Solie an announcer, they had one thing in common: Both

*Photos by Duane Long*



Scott Hall squeezes a toe-hold on The Terminator. Hall is a fan favorite again in Florida.

plied their wares for Championship Wrestling From Florida, the oldest and most well-known regional federation in the country at a time when wrestling was still a regional sport. There was also big-time wrestling in New York, Tennessee, Georgia, and Texas, but in no state was the sport as hot as in Florida.

In the mid-1980s, however, both Jim Crockett Promotions and the WWF started running live shows throughout Florida in cities previously occupied solely by Championship Wrestling From Florida. When Crockett Promotions took over the CWF in 1987, it started ignoring the smaller cities. Little by little, the distinction between Crockett Promotions and the CWF became minute. Finally, in late '87, CWF offices were shut down.

It was the end of a 40-year era. But dreams die hard in wrestling, and as long as individuals remember their roots, some things will always survive. Last summer, a federation called Florida Championship Wrestling began running shows in the areas previously inhabited by the CWF. Little by little, the federation grew and people began to take notice.

In January, Dusty Rhodes announced that he was leaving the NWA and returning to his roots in Florida. When he arrived, he found that Gordon Solie had arrived months earlier and was already bringing wrestling back to fans in the area. The greatest tag team that never wrestled was back again.

Tradition dies hard in wrestling, too.

"I'm delighted, I'm absolutely delighted to be back in Florida, and it's great to have Dusty Rhodes, the 'American Dream,' back, too," Solie said. "When you're able to get somebody like Dusty, everything else follows suit. People saw him come here, so everybody else wanted to come.



It's like the gunfighters coming home."

Indeed. In addition to Rhodes, such familiar Florida names as Dick Slater, Al Perez, Steve Keirn, Mike Graham, Black Bart, and manager Sir Oliver Humperdink are back in the area. Also there are Bam Bam Bigelow, The Commandos, Scott Hall, The Nasty Boys, Bobby Jagers, Lou Perez, and second-generation star Dustin Rhodes.

"Being back in Florida is like a breath of fresh air," Humperdink said. "You know, the Sir Oliver Humperdink people saw in the WWF just wasn't the same old Oliver Humperdink. This is my home, and this is where I'm comfortable. It's great to see Florida rising again."

The future growth of the FCW will lie in the hands of President R.C. Randy Roberts, a Texas entrepreneur who recently moved his corporate headquarters to Florida. Roberts, 36, who has been affiliated with the sports and

hotel industry for many years, formed the Professional Wrestling Federation, sanctioning body of the FCW.

"We're trying to bring Florida wrestling back to the same kind of entertainment and respect it's had in years past, and we're only talking about five or six years ago," Solie said. "Right now we're in a rebuilding process. We're reestablishing our TV ties and relations with the buildings."

Already, FCW's schedule is hectic. "We only have three open dates in the entire month of March," Solie said. "And we're starting to draw crowds. We expect four or five thousand for our big homecoming show at the Tampa Fairgrounds Entertainment Hall (March 11). We have shows in Orlando every Sunday night, we're running in Nassau, Sarasota, towns all over the state."

There is, of course, some risk

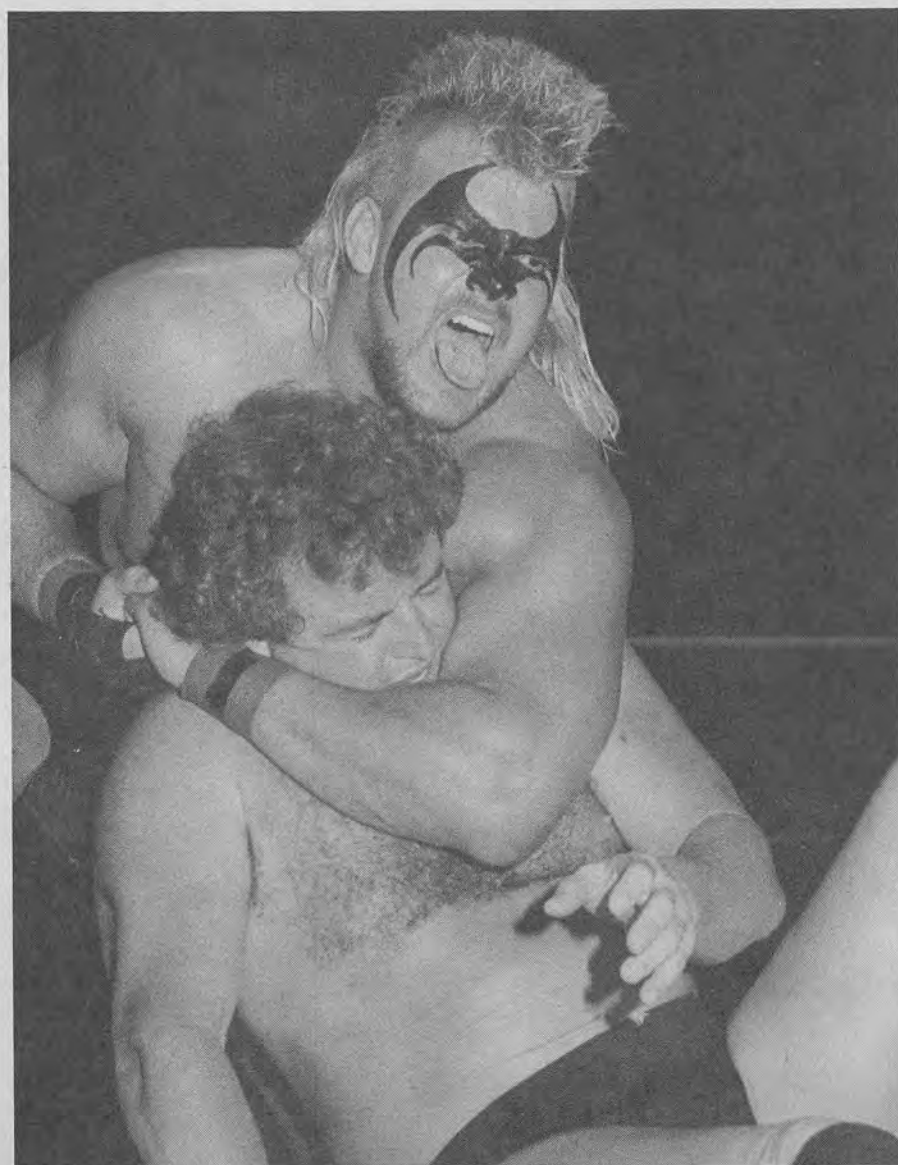
Though he's in an awkward position, Al Perez won't relinquish his hold on Mike Graham (left), who is the FCW heavyweight champion. Jim Backlund legdrops Tyree Pride (below). Backlund and Pride are feuding for the FCW junior heavyweight title.







Graham twists Al Perez' ankle (left). The Terminator chinlocks Graham (bottom left). Terminator holds the tag team title with Johnny Ace. Announcer Gordon Solie says fans in the smallest Florida towns will have the opportunity to see the same matches and stars seen in the larger cities.



involved in this venture. Over the past decade, the NWA and WWF have expanded their base and run cards in all parts of the country. In many areas, 20 hours of televised wrestling are available each week. But Solie feels competition from the NWA and the WWF won't hurt the PWF.

"People in the small towns have gotten out of the habit of going to wrestling," Solie said. "They've felt left out. When we go to a town like Sebring that hasn't had wrestling in a long time, it's a reeducation process. The NWA and WWF were only hitting the major cities, and we want to put it back in the hands of the people. The guy who lives in Sebring is just as entitled to see top-name talent as a guy who lives in Orlando or Miami."

There are currently three FCW titles. Mike Graham holds the FCW heavyweight title, Johnny Ace and Terminator are the tag champs, and Jim Backlund is the junior heavyweight champ. The most important title, however, was to be crowned on March 11 when Dusty Rhodes took on U.S. Steel for the first-ever PWF heavyweight championship.

Whether or not the FCW can equal Championship Wrestling From Florida's success remains to be seen. The wrestlers, however, are committed to providing fans with top-rate action.

"This is gonna be the hottest spot in the entire country," Rhodes said. "Soon *everyone's* gonna come down here."

"I'm here," Bam Bam Bigelow said, "because this is where it's at. This is where all the talent has gone to."

And Florida, where it all began, is where it is today. □

# Rick Morton & THEY HAD TO BE ENEMIES

By Dave Rosenbaum

**S**LEEPLESS NIGHTS HAD become normal for Robert Gibson. For the better part of January and February, Gibson would lie in bed, straining to keep his eyes open because he was afraid of falling asleep. He was afraid of the dark.

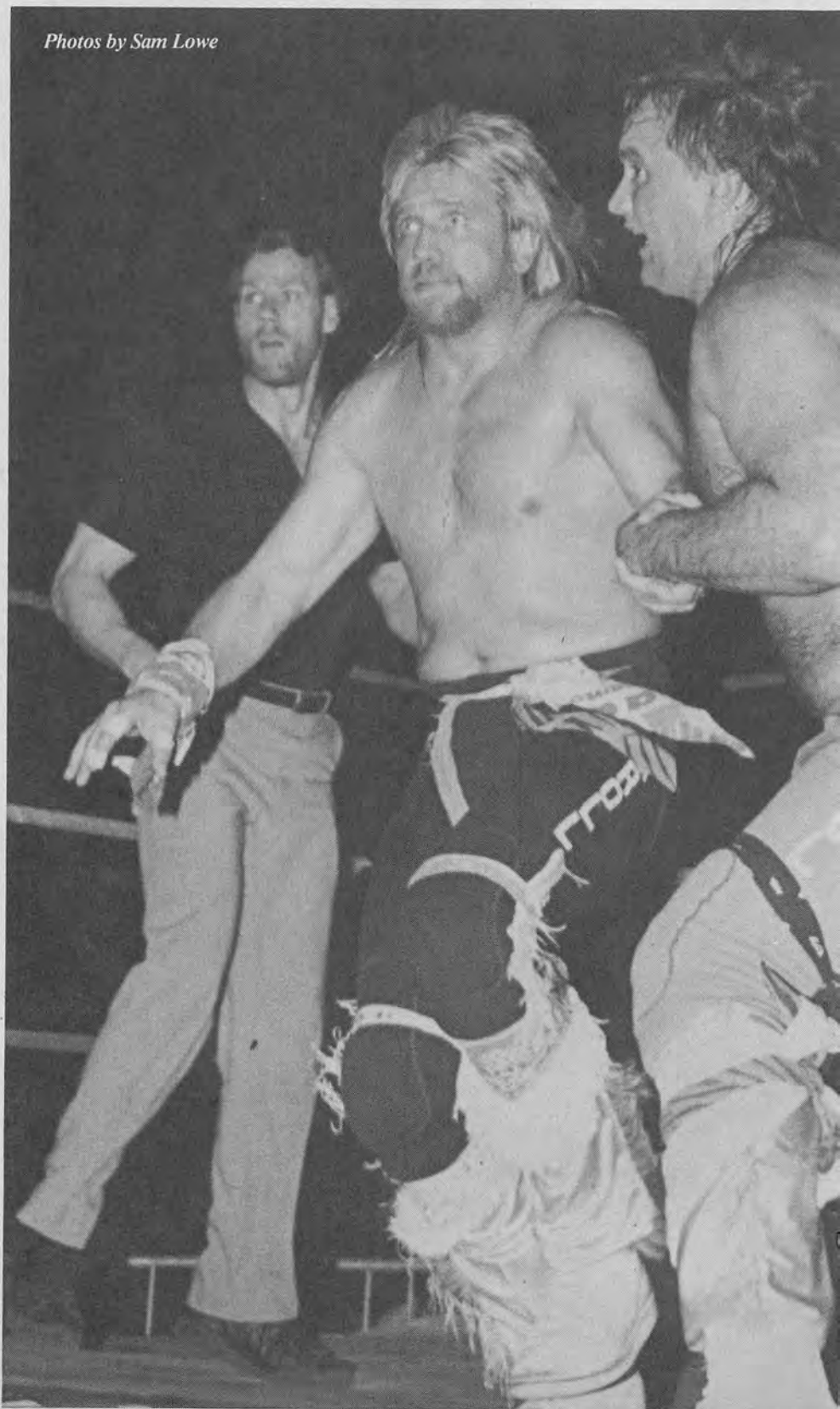
"I kept having this nightmare that me and Ricky were in the middle of the ring beating the stuffings out of each other," Gibson said. "I'd have this dream, and I'd wake up in a cold sweat every time. It was definitely the worst time of my wrestling career."

For Gibson, that nightmare almost became reality on February 13 in Memphis, when he and Jerry Lawler squared off in a tag team match against The Master of Pain and Gibson's Rock 'n' Roll Express partner, Rick Morton. But reality had a different ending than the nightmare. It turned out to be a much more pleasant experience ... but not for Lawler.

Late in the match, all four men were battling in the ring. Morton and Lawler were fighting over a chain Morton had brought into the ring. Meanwhile, Gibson had The Master of Pain caught in the ropes. Lawler was about to slug Morton when Gibson suddenly stepped in and held back Lawler's hands. "I'm just here for a wrestling match, not to destroy anybody," Gibson shouted, realizing that *he*, not his nightmare, could control his destiny.

Then the situation got out of control. Morton seized the opportunity and kicked Lawler, who bounced into Gibson and struck him with the chain. While Lawler

*Photos by Sam Lowe*





# Robert Gibson: TO BECOME FRIENDS AGAIN

Robert Gibson whips Rick Morton across the ring (left). They fight on the ropes (bottom right).

**Rick Morton and Robert Gibson have been the best of friends since they first formed The Rock 'n' Roll Express in 1983. A recent rift caused them to be enemies for a night, but it didn't take long for this popular duo to get back together again!**



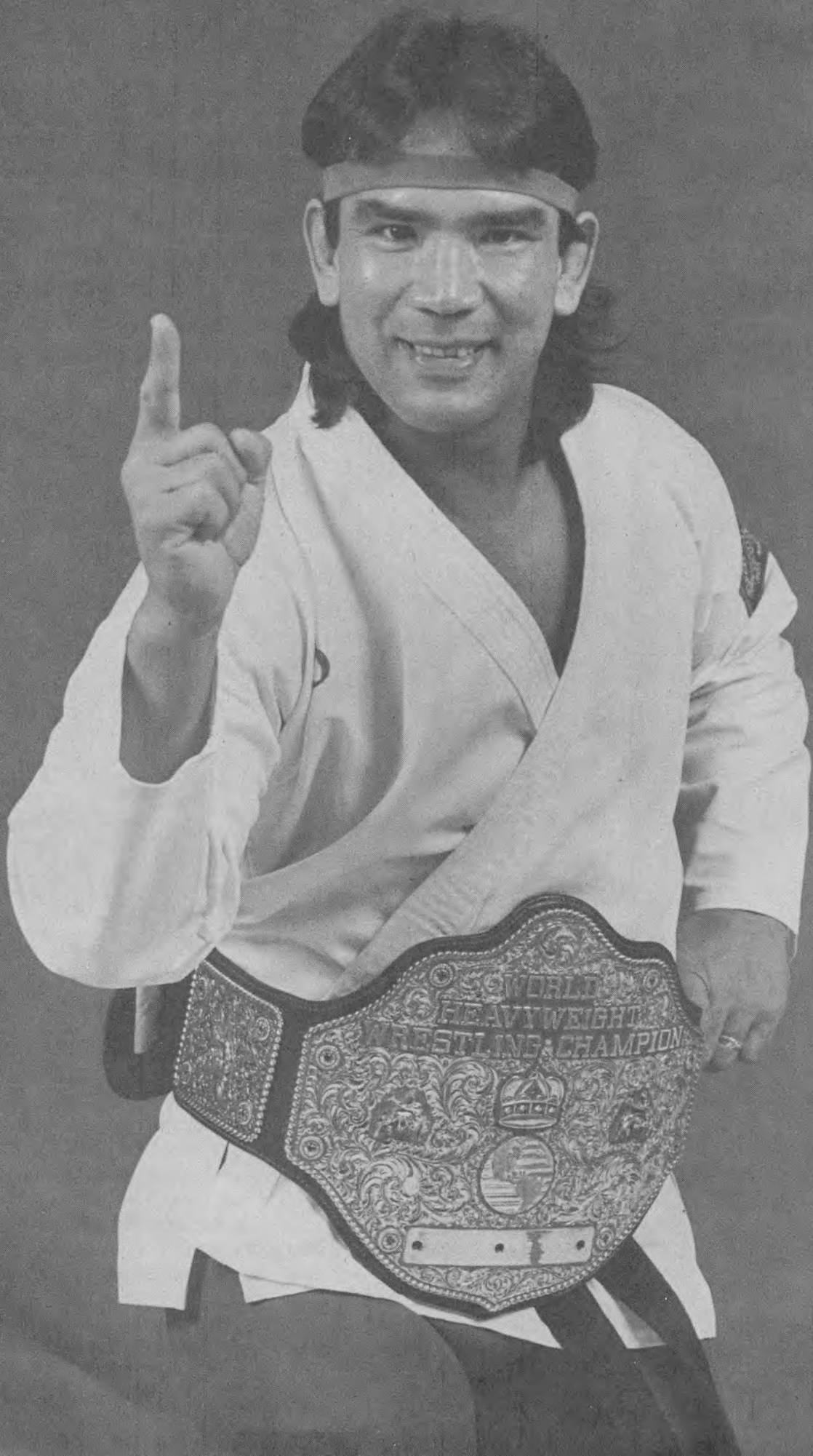
and Gibson argued, Morton attacked Lawler from behind. Then Gibson joined in on Lawler while Morton released The Master of Pain from the ropes. Suddenly, Lawler was being triple-teamed, and his own partner was a part of the attack!

Help finally came from Bill Dundee, who charged the ring and made it a five-man battle. Even matchmaker Eddie Marlin tried to break up the fight, which raged all the way back to the dressing room area. Morton responded by break-

ing a chair over his head. After the brawl ended, Morton, Gibson, and Lawler came to several different conclusions.

Gibson's statement: "What happened tonight wasn't premeditated. I just wanted to teach Ricky a lesson because of all the things he's done here over the past month. But as it turned out, Ricky was right. My buddy over here told me Lawler had changed, but I didn't believe him. Well, Lawler *has* changed, and it's all been for the worst."

*(Continued on page 54)*





# *Finally, Fortune Favors The Challenger:*



Steamboat rolls Flair up for the pin.

# RICK STEAMBOAT WINS RIC FLAIR'S NWA BELT!

By Stu Saks

**T**HE SCENE HAS been repeated so often over the past eight years that it's come to be expected. Whether by disqualification, managerial interference, the mistimed leap of an unfortunate challenger, or the intervention of a referee or official, Ric Flair gets lucky and saves his NWA World title.

Lady Luck and champion Flair, in fact, have walked hand-in-hand since 1981; more so over the past few years, as Flair's overall ability has weakened slightly while the challengers have gotten younger and stronger. One of the more common sights in NWA champi-

onship matches has been Flair lying prone on the mat and the challenger covering him for the pin while the referee—knocked out in a collision moments earlier—lay a few feet away.

But on February 20, Flair ran out of luck. Again, a referee—Tommy Young—was knocked out in a collision, apparently saving Flair from certain defeat. But substitute referee Teddy Long entered the ring and made the count that gave Rick Steamboat his first-ever world championship.

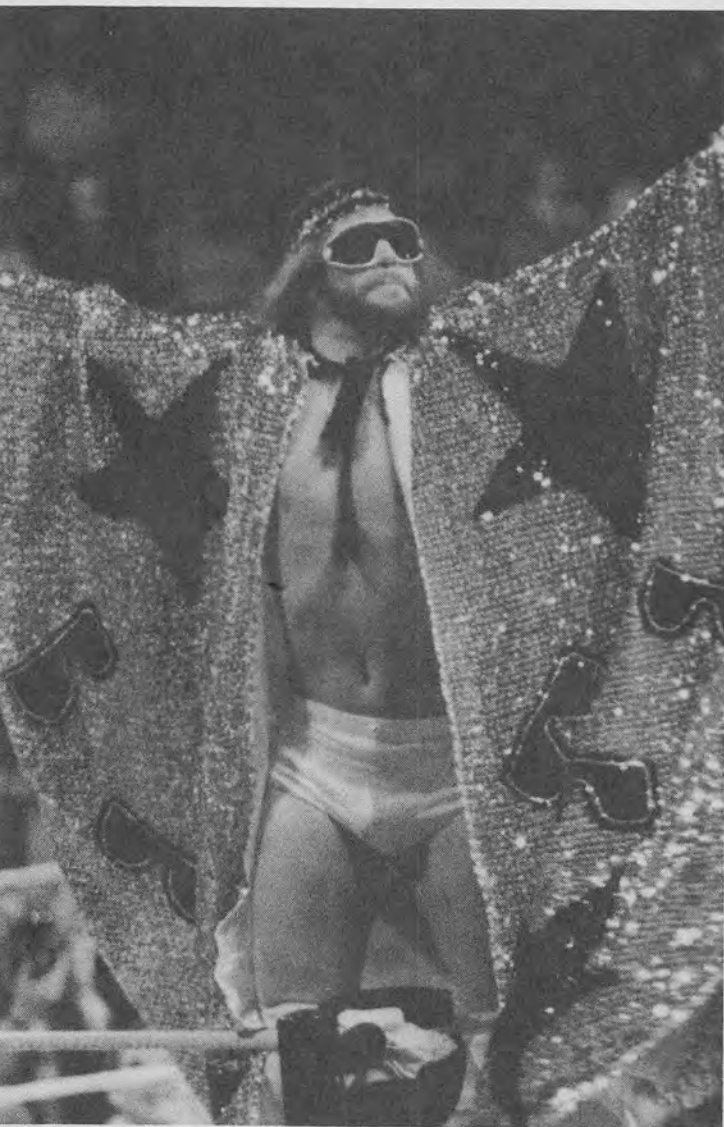
It was a moment to be cherished.

(Continued on page 58)

*For eight years, Ric Flair has been the best—and luckiest—wrestler in the NWA. But on February 20 in Chicago, his luck ran out. Ironically, luckless Rick Steamboat was right there to take advantage and win his first world title*

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# SPECIAL FAN BALLOT ***MACHO MADNESS OR HULKAMANIA***



## ***WHICH REALLY RULES?***

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Was Hogan right to help Elizabeth and leave Savage behind?  
Was Savage right to accuse the "Hulkster" of lusting after  
Elizabeth and being jealous of his World title? You decide! In  
this special fan ballot, the editors of *Inside Wrestling* want to  
know who you support!

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**A** FUNNY THING happened in the offices of *Inside Wrestling* during the week of February 6. Expecting to be deluged by a flood of mail from angry fans protesting Randy Savage's actions on NBC's *Main Event* and pledging their all-out support for Hulk Hogan, the editors instead received mail of shockingly diverse opinions.

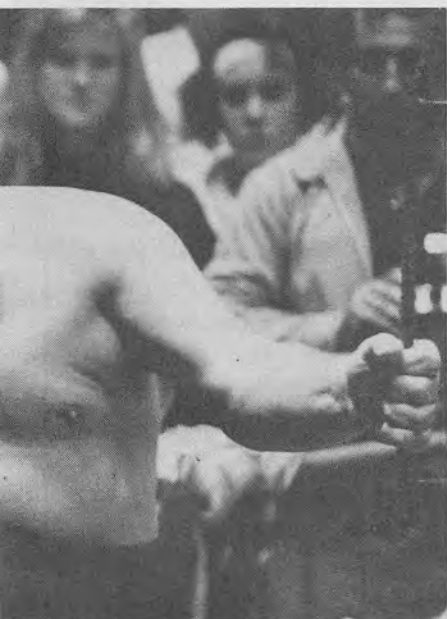
"I don't blame Randy Savage for doing what he did on February

3 in Milwaukee," wrote one young fan. "Hulk Hogan has been stealing the spotlight long enough, and just deserting Savage during the heat of battle wasn't right. When WrestleMania V rolls around, the 'Macho Man' is going to prove once and for all that he's the *real* WWF World champion and could've done it without Hogan's help."

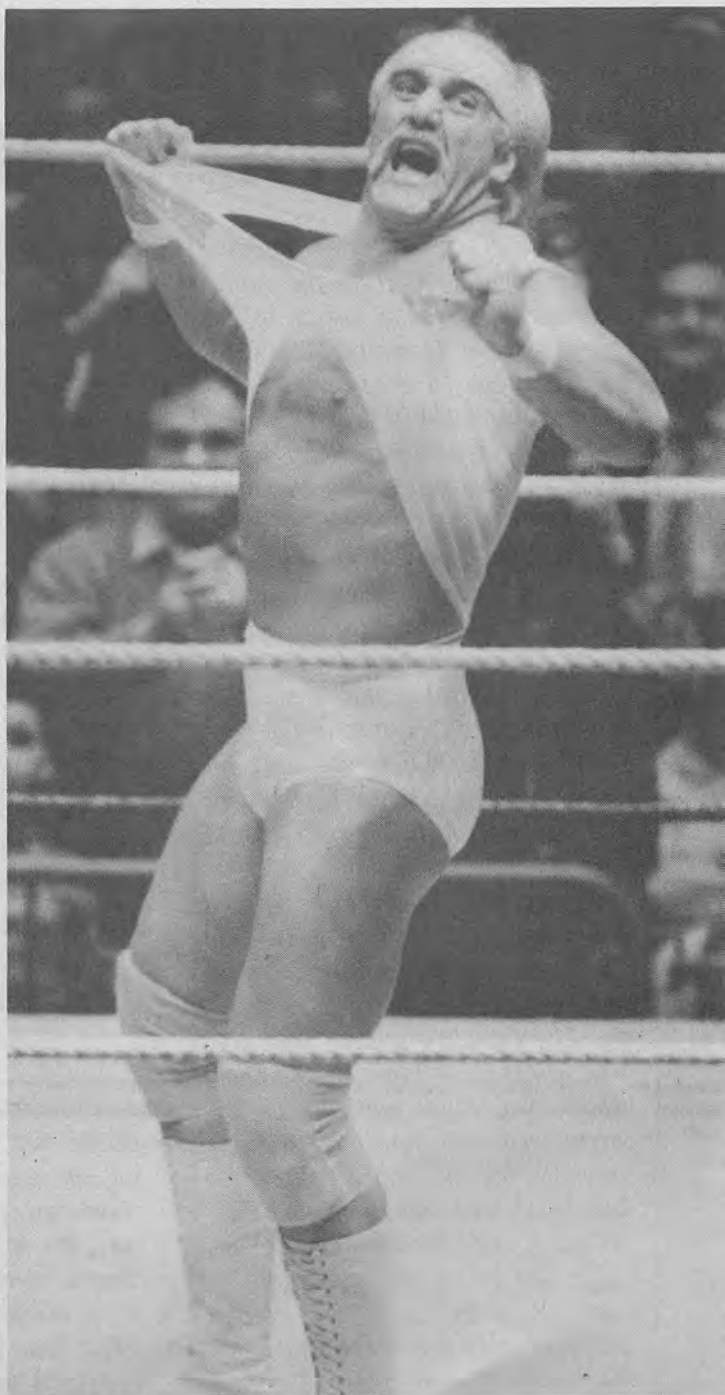
"The 'Macho Man' has finally shown his true colors," wrote an-

other fan. "It took a year, but he's back to his paranoid, selfish, maniacal ways. Hogan was crazy to trust Savage, and now we're seeing why. If Savage didn't understand that Hogan was just trying to help Elizabeth, then it proves that Savage doesn't really care about Elizabeth. Savage would see my little five-year-old brother as a threat. I hope Hogan kills him at WrestleMania V."

(Continued on page 62)



Randy "Macho Man" Savage shows off his flashy robe (far left). Savage is furious as he runs Andre the Giant into the ringpost (left). "Macho Man's" rival, friend, and rival again, Hulk Hogan, pulls Ted DiBiase by the beard (below). Typically, the "Hulkster" rips his shirt off before the match (right). Both Hogan and Savage have their rabidly loyal fans, and both have been sharply criticized for their recent actions.



# HOTSEAT

## LEX LUGER

### "THEY'LL NEVER DOUBT ME AGAIN!"

**I**N LESS THAN two months, Lex Luger went from the depths of the valley to the height of the mountain. On December 26, 1988, Luger suffered a controversial pinfall loss to NWA World champion Ric Flair. Afterward, Flair vowed never to give Luger another title shot.

Luger made the best of a bad situation. Relegated to a spot far down on the list of World title contenders, Luger decided to make the U.S. championship his goal. On February 20 in Chicago, at the Chi-Town Rumble, Luger defeated his former tag team partner Barry Windham to regain the belt he held for four months back in 1987.

To say that Luger has matured would be an understatement. The old Luger thought only of himself and was weak enough to be lured into The Four Horsemen. But now, with nearly four years in the sport behind him, Luger can turn an apparent step backward into a surge forward. He no longer sulks. In fact, when Steamboat defeated Flair for the World title that same night, Luger was in on the celebration.

Impressed by Luger's determination and restructured outlook on life, the editors of *Inside Wrestling* decided to learn more about this

new man. Assistant Editor Andy Rodriguez flew to Atlanta to speak with the "Total Package, Vol. II."

**Q:** Lex Luger, I just want to say congratulations on your victory and for getting yourself back on your feet after a tough loss in December. It takes quite a man to bounce back like you have.

**A:** Well, Andy, I appreciate your words, and I'd also like to thank

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**I have something to say to Flair: I still want your hide in the ring. I want you to come after my U.S. title. I'm not putting a limit on how many chances you're gonna get.**

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all the fans who've stayed behind me and given me all this support. You know, a lot of people doubted me, but let me say one thing: They'll never doubt me again.

**Q:** What do you mean?

**A:** After Flair beat me at Starrcade, everybody said I'd never be champion, I didn't have what it takes,

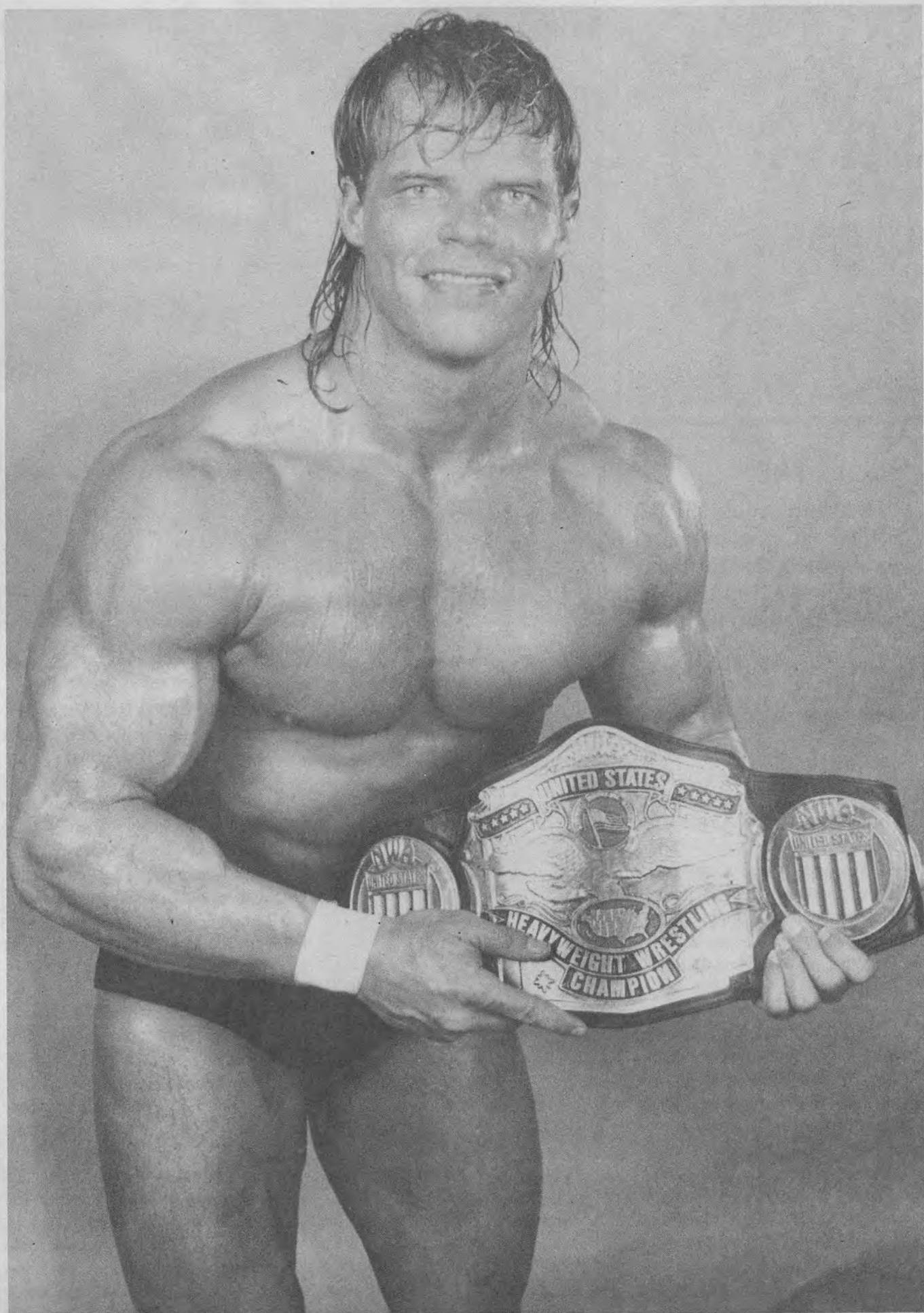
that I was overrated. It's like everybody forgot I was U.S. champion back in '87. Even more important, I had Flair beaten last summer when that commissioner stopped the match, and I had him beaten at Starrcade, too, but my leg gave out. Listen, I don't want to make excuses, but I've proven several times that I have what it takes to beat Flair.

**Q:** But that's behind you, right? I mean, now that you're U.S. champ, defending the title is going to be your main goal, isn't it?

**A:** That's true, especially since Rick Steamboat's the champion. But I have something to say to Flair: I still want your hide in the ring. I want you to come after my U.S. title. I'm inviting you to wrestle me as many times as you want with my title on the line. I'm not running and hiding like you did. I'm not putting a limit on how many chances you're gonna get. You accept this challenge, and you can have 100 title shots. How about it, "Nature Boy"?

**Q:** Now that's quite a challenge, although I'm sure you're aware that Flair's no stranger to the U.S. title himself. He's held it several times. In fact, Flair and Steamboat have feuded over the U.S. title in the







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I'd like to wrestle Rick Steamboat. It would be a great match, and the fans would love it, but I don't think it's going to happen.

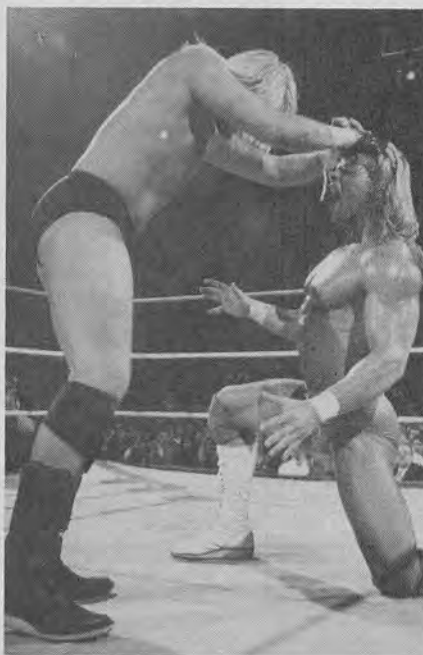
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past. Don't you think Flair might not want to take a step backward? After all, I think he has Steamboat on his mind right now, not you.

**A:** I understand what you're saying, but I consider the U.S. title to be one of the most important titles in wrestling, and I'm proud to hold it. Now my goal is to make the U.S. title *the* most important title in wrestling. You know, a belt is only as good as the man who's wearing it, and Flair's done a number on that poor World title for the past few years. Now take a look at who's worn *my* belt: Windham, Dusty, Roddy Piper, Wahoo McDaniel, Dick Slater—it's practically a Who's Who of wrestling. But my challenge has nothing to do with the U.S. title. It has to do with the fact that I want to prove to the world that I can pin Flair in a one-on-one match. I've already done it in tag teams.



Luger displays rare aerial skills with a dive off the top rope as Windham moves out of the way (above). Later in the bout, Luger is the victim of Windham's claw (below). Luger made mistakes in the match, but managed to hold off Windham and regain the U.S. title.



**Q:** That's true, and it's why so many people, myself included, are confused about your inability to pin him in title matches. What happens?

**A:** It's simple. Flair is a lucky man, and his luck ran out against Steam-

boat. All I know is that when Teddy Long ran into the ring to make the count on Flair, that's something that never happened when I wrestled him. Substitute refs are a great idea, but they've come along a little too late for me. But now luck is no longer a factor. You see, I have the U.S. title, and I won it fair and square. Flair no longer has the World title, and he *lost* it fair and square. Now I'm in the driver's seat.

**Q:** Let's get away from Flair for a moment and talk about Barry Windham, who, after all, was the man you beat for the U.S. title. Let's face it, that was a very close match, and it could've gone either way.

**A:** Let me tell you something, that was one of the toughest matches of my life. Barry's turned into a bit of a jerk, but he's one tremendous wrestler, a heck of a lot better than Flair. Barry knows all the moves and he has that killer instinct that



so few wrestlers have. I may not respect Barry as a man, but I respect him as a wrestler.

**Q:** Speaking of respect, I know one man you *don't* have too much respect for is J.J. Dillon. But did you realize that the Chi-Town Rumble was Hiro Matsuda's first big show managing Flair and Windham, and both men lost their belts? How do you feel about that?

**A:** Well, I have mixed feelings about Matsuda. You know, of course, that he trained and advised me back in 1984 and '85, and I owe a lot of my career to him. He taught me how to put all my raw materials together, and he really set my career on the right track. I wanted to go right into the big time, head right into the NWA, but Hiro said, "Lex, if you want to get anywhere, you must start slow and relax. You have plenty of time." Of course he was right, and I was able to pay my dues in Florida while learning the ropes. If not for Matsuda, I'd probably still be in way over my head.

**Q:** So you like Matsuda?

**A:** No. I *liked* Matsuda, and that's why I have mixed feelings about him. It's hard to believe he's the same man he used to be. Matsuda

used to stress hard work, but now he's so obsessed with money, it's unbelievable. It's ridiculous that a huge Japanese corporation could have so much control over an American sport, and it's even more amazing that Flair and Windham would allow themselves to be bought. Right now, Matsuda's on the wrong side. As far as I'm concerned, when he loses, I'm happy.

**Q:** So what's your next move? The way I see it, you're U.S. champion, which is great, but Steamboat is World champion, and that's your ultimate goal. Of course, Steamboat's a fan favorite, and the NWA seldom schedules fan favorite vs. fan favorite World title matches. Would you like to see Steamboat keep the belt, or would you rather see him lose it to someone you could wrestle?

**A:** Let me see, how can I answer that question? Put it this way: I'd like to wrestle Rick Steamboat. It would be a great match, and the fans would love it, but I don't think it's going to happen. U.S. champion vs. World champion? That could be the match of the century. Put both belts on the line and really let us go at it. We're such different wrestlers, I think ev-



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**I'm not putting any time limits on my career. When the year 2000 rolls around, I will *still* be putting on the tights.**

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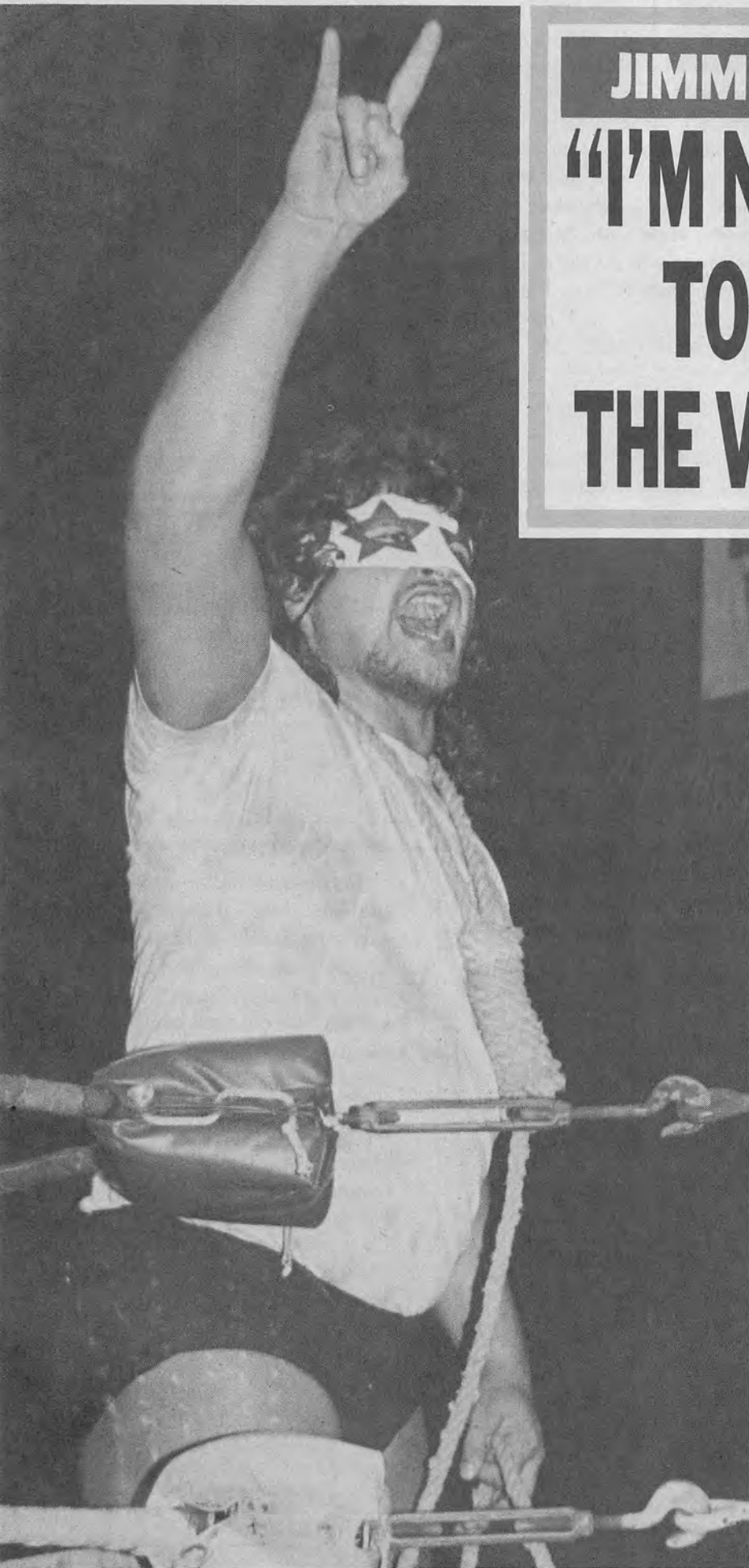
everybody would find it fascinating. In reality, though, I'm not going to wrestle Steamboat, so I'd rather see him keep the belt. Listen, Steamboat won't have the belt forever, and I'll be around for a long time. I'll have my chances. Remember about three years ago I came up with that five-year plan? Well, I'm not putting any time limits on my career. When the year 2000 rolls around, I will *still* be putting on the tights. There's plenty of time.

**Q:** It's incredible to hear you speaking like this. The old Lex Luger always seemed to be rushing somewhere, but now you seem to have a better perspective on things. Of course, only time will tell.

**A:** That's right, Andy, time *will* tell. But for now, I have something I'm very proud of, and I have something to work for. I'm no longer in no man's land. It's great to be a champion again! □



Hiro Matsuda looks on as Windham apparently pins Luger for the win. Luger lifted his shoulder just before the three-count, though, while the referee completed the count that would cost Windham the U.S. belt.



# JIMMY JACK FUNK

## "I'M NOT LOOKING TO REPLACE THE VON ERICHS"

By Bob Smith

THE YOUNG TEXAN can barely make his way to the ring through the massive throng of fans. He stands on the second turnbuckle, holding the Lone Star flag in one hand and a yellow rose in the other. The public address system blares "Texas, Our Texas"—the state song—and the crowd at Dallas' Sportatorium responds with a standing ovation and uproarious cheers.

An appearance by Kerry Von Erich? Not this time. Kevin Von Erich? Not even close.

Would you believe Texas fans are going wild over Jimmy Jack Funk?

Suddenly—and unexpectedly—this veteran brawler is one of the most popular stars in World Class wrestling!

"Hey, I'm havin' trouble believin' it, too," said a bewildered Funk. "But this is the way it *always* should have been. I'm not looking to replace the Von Erichs—they've *earned* the right to be legends around these parts. I'm just lookin' to do what's right, for once in my life."

For the past few years, Funk has been one of the most hated men in wrestling, and for good reason. A

Photos by Buddy Myers

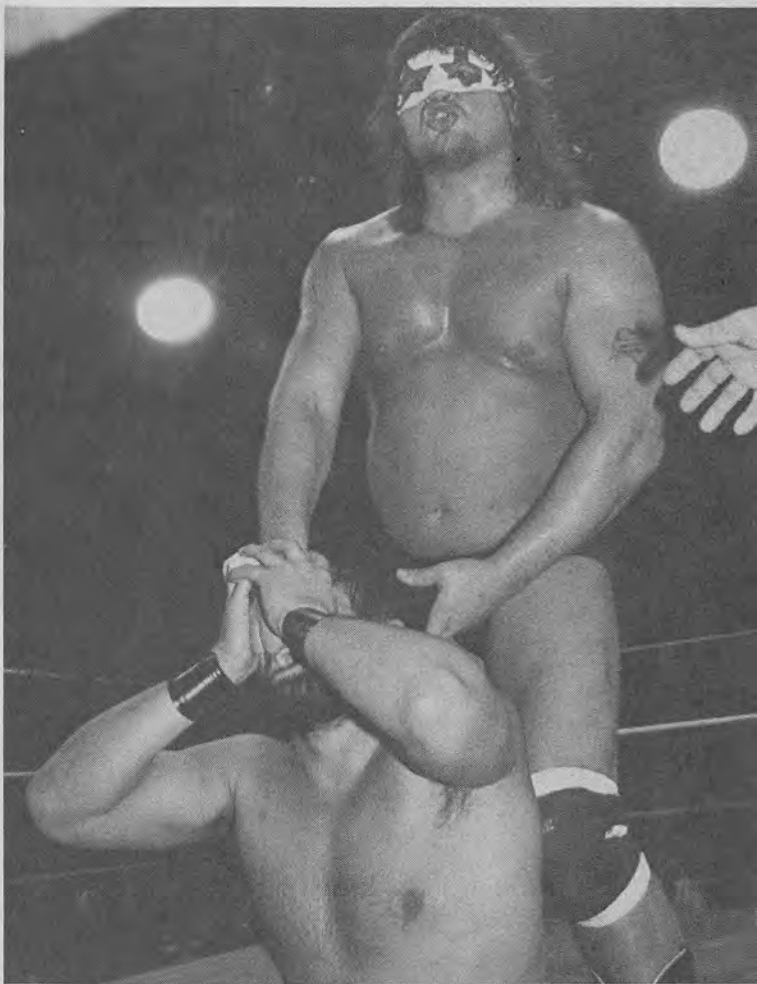
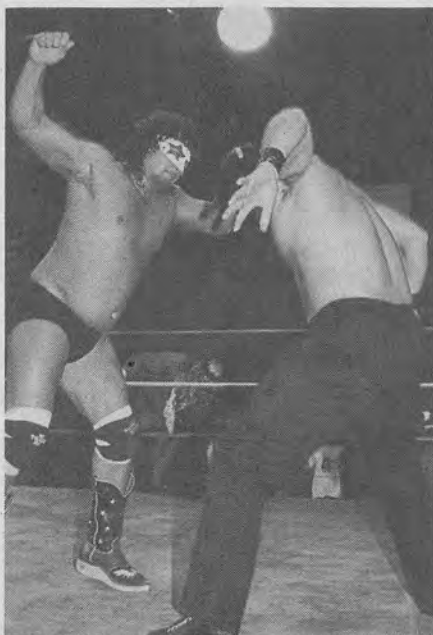




Jimmy Jack Funk stops Super Black Ninja from using a chair on him (above). Funk gives Ninja an eyerake (right) and delivers a forearm blow (below). After spending years as a rulebreaker, Funk is fighting for the state of Texas.

man with vast scientific knowledge, Funk chose to spend his time busting heads and breaking bones, with no apparent goal or purpose other than to inflict pain on his opponents.

Until recently, that is. Late last year, Funk joined Devastation Inc., the rulebreaking organization led by manager Gen. Skandor Akbar. Surrounded by such ruthless competitors as Cactus Jack, Gary Young, Super Black Ninja, Kamala, and Iceman Parsons, Funk was winning the majority of his matches and earning more money than ever before. Inside, however, he was going through serious emotional turmoil, much of it stemming from the



way Akbar does business.

"I'm a man who's used to getting the job done on his own," said Funk. "I was trained for the ring by the great Dory Funk Jr., and that gave me the inner strength I've always needed to fight my own battles. But with Akbar and his henchmen, all the defense I learned wasn't really necessary. Any time I got in trouble, there were two, three, or even four guys there to bail me out. It was easy money—but it was nothin' I could be proud of."

Suddenly, on January 10 in the Sportatorium, Funk's life changed dramatically. During an interview with Frank Dusek, Akbar was blast-

**Jimmy Jack Funk has become a Texas favorite, standing up for the Lone Star State in his war against Gen. Skandor Akbar. His former manager claims Funk's new attitude is only a ruse in order to replace the Von Erichs in the hearts of the fans, but Funk insists his only goal is to rid Texas of Akbar!**



Funk hits Ninja with his cowbell during a strap match. Once a member of Gen. Skandor Akbar's Devastation Inc., Funk now wrestles alongside the Von Erichs and other fan favorites. Funk says he belongs fighting on the side of good.

ing the Von Erichs, World Class, the Sportatorium fans, and the Texas way of life. Unexpectedly, Funk grabbed the microphone away from his manager.

"*Nobody* puts down the great state of Texas that way," said the Portland, Oregon, native. "My family and all my friends live here, and a lot of 'em were present that night. Akbar was making me rich, but there's no way I was gonna let him talk a bunch of trash about my people. Akbar can put down certain wrestlers, or even the World Class officials. But I won't let him trash the great state of Texas."

Funk insisted that Akbar lay off of Texas, but the manager refused to change his position. Enraged, Funk struck his manager with a vicious right cross. True to form, the rest of Akbar's army ganged up on Funk, throwing him into the ring and administering a savage five-on-one beating. When it looked like Funk might be seriously injured, Kerry Von Erich and Jeff Jarrett ran the rulebreakers away.

"What a fool Funk is," a smug Akbar claimed afterward. "As far as I'm concerned, he's no better than the rest of these commoners. If these are the kind of people he

embraces, then let him stand among them. He is not the kind of competitor I would want around my *real* champions, anyway."

The incident changed Funk's opinions about a lot of things, including the Von Erichs. "I can't believe that Kerry came to my rescue," said Funk. "For the past few months, I had some hellacious battles with him, including a couple of brutal steel cage matches. Well, I'm man enough to admit I was wrong about him. He's a good, proud Texan to the bone. I'd be proud to call him my friend."

Since the incident at the Sportatorium, Funk has undergone a remarkable change, even going so far as to replace his black leather "Lone Ranger" mask with one bearing the Texas colors. He and both Von Erich brothers have teamed in several tag team matches against Young and Parsons. But Akbar claims that Funk's sudden willingness to please is masking other ambitions.

"He's trying to replace the Von Erichs in the hearts of these Texas fans," warned Akbar. "He's gained his popularity by accident, since Kerry's chasing Jerry Lawler around the world in quest of the World Class title, and Kevin's been in and out of action because of injuries. Just wait 'til those Von Erichs get back to action. Funk will turn against them the same way he turned against me."

Funk insists he's not trying to replace *anybody* in the hearts of the fans—especially not the Von Erichs.

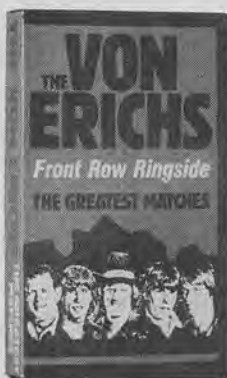
"That doesn't make any sense," insists Funk. "The Von Erichs have earned all the fan support they get by being great wrestlers. Now the fans are supporting me, too, mainly because I'm at war against Akbar and his band of creeps. And you know what? I've never been so happy in my whole life, not even when I was tagging with Dory and Terry. *This* is what I was born to do—defend the honor of the great state of Texas against any man fool enough to challenge it." □





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**The telephone wires sizzle every month as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to see the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off . . . One on One**

# ONE ON ONE

**T**HERE'S A VERY good reason why federations are hesitant to strip champions of their titles. In most cases, the new champion didn't face the ex-champion to win his title. Thus, you have one man who properly claims to be champion, and another who can rightly state that he's still champ because he's never been beaten. It's a bad situation that can hurt the image of a title.

Such is the case with current AWA World champion Larry Zbyszko and former champ Jerry Lawler. In late January, AWA officials stripped Lawler of the World title for missing several defenses. Zbyszko won the vacant title on February 7 at the St. Paul Civic Center in an 18-man battle royal.

Lawler was not allowed to participate in the battle royal and continues to claim that he is the real AWA World champ. Zbyszko, on the other hand, claims that he is deserving of the title because he "beat 17 top contenders in one night." He's also said that Lawler deserved to be stripped of the title.

Such a reaction from both men was predictable. A World title, after all, is the ultimate goal of every wrestler. Winning or losing one cannot be taken lightly. But as we said, Lawler and Zbyszko still haven't met in the ring. In fact, they've never even had a chance to air their differences to one another. Never, that is, until the editors of *Inside Wrestling* brought them together . . . "One on One."



*"Let me tell you a little something. If you had your priorities in order, you would have taken care of the World title first. Jeez, you're such a spudhead."*

—Larry Zbyszko

## LARRY ZBYSZKO:

Well, well, mutant subhuman ex-champion has-been Lawler feels he has something to say to the "Living Legend" of professional wrestling. Babble and sputter away, pal, the World champion is all ears.

## JERRY LAWLER:

The only thing I have to say to you, Zbyszko, is "I accept" when you finally have the guts to challenge me for my AWA World title.

**LZ:** Your AWA World title? That's a laugh. I thought you didn't care about the title! Why else would you miss seven scheduled title defenses? Why else would you not bother to fight the lifetime ban the AWA put on you? What's this sudden interest in your title? And if you feel it is your title,

come on, pal, let's do it! I'm ready now!

**JL:** Just hold on there a second, Zbyszko. Don't tell me about missing title defenses. I was defending two belts at the same time, the World Class title and the AWA title. I had two obligations. Stanley Blackburn knew full well that I couldn't defend both titles every night, and he knew when I was busy with the World Class belt. Blackburn can say what he wants, but he knew I couldn't be there on those nights, and he scheduled me anyway. Blackburn is a blackmailer and he knows it. Besides, you know as well as I do, since you're parading around with the belt, that a champion only has to defend his title once every 30 days. Well, I did that and more, and I'd like to see you



# N ONE



*"If that belt has any value whatsoever, it's because of what I did. I made it a World title, not just a title. I just hope you don't do too much damage to it."*

—Jerry Lawler

worth, the number-one man who did so is Nick Bockwinkel, the man *I* retired from the sport. Ditto the WWF belt and Bruno Sammartino.

**JL:** You retired Bruno Sammartino? Now let's be serious, Zbyszko. According to my records, Ivan Koloff and Superstar Graham beat Sammartino, but you never came close. Bockwinkel? I don't remember you ever beating him either, even when he was old and gray. I'm no historian, but Curt Hennig beat Bockwinkel and *I* beat Curt Hennig. Since Bockwinkel pounded you countless times, what does that say about what would happen if you and I met in the ring. But let me give you some advice, pal, steer clear of the ring and you can hold the belt for 30 days. Otherwise, you're finished.

**LZ:** Are you brain-dead? I'm not talking about world title victories, I'm talking about *retiring* people. Ending careers. Drawing the final line. Bringing it all to an end. I've done it twice to people regarded as the best in their respective federations: Bruno in the WWF, and Bockwinkel in the AWA. I'll be happy to do it again to a twerp known as "The King," just to complete the hat trick. Step on up, Jerry, your destiny is waiting. But, oh, I forgot, you've been *banned*. Good job.

**JL:** Okay, Zbyszko, I've heard enough of your senseless blathering. Tell me, when and how did you retire Sammartino and Bockwinkel? And I want dates, places, and times.

**LZ:** Bruno: August 9, 1980, Shea Stadium in New York. The record says I lost, but look at the match tapes. Bruno was a bloody mess, and never the same after that. He was a shell of his former self, and the wrestling world acknowledged that fact; so did his record. Bockwinkel: August 1, 1987, Minneapolis. Nick vs. Curt Hennig, and Curt helped me piledrive Bockwinkel into senile obscurity. Dates and places, pal. Chew on *that*.

**JL:** Just because you destroy a man doesn't mean you're better than him. I knew Nick Bockwinkel, Zbyszko, and you're no Nick Bockwinkel. And how dare you compare yourself to Sammartino? Zbyszko, you make me sick. □

do the same. You'll never be the champion I was and still am.

**LZ:** Let me tell *you* a little something, there, Lawler. There's a little thing in this world called "priorities." If you had your priorities in order, you would have taken care of the World title first, *then* the World Class title. You weren't much of a champion, considering how you placed the World title second on your priorities list. Jeez, you're such a spudhead it's beyond belief.

**JL:** Give me a break, Zbyszko. Are you really that dense? I gave that World title top priority for over eight months, I defended that damn thing almost every night. Remember this, buddy, if that belt has any value whatsoever, it's because of what I did. I made it a *World* title, not just a title. I chal-

lenged champions from every federation. I did what champions haven't done for years: I wrestled challengers from outside the AWA. I made people excited about the AWA World title. I just hope you don't do too much damage to it. I wouldn't want people to think that Jerry Lawler held a worthless belt.

**LZ:** Let's just look and see the people from other federations you defended the belt against. There's Austin Idol, a man who never amounted to anything in this sport. Tommy Rich, a washed-up nobody who once held the NWA belt—for five days. There's Bill Dundee, a real killer at 5'7". Quite a list, Jerry, and I didn't even include 257 matches with Kerry Von Erich. As for people who gave the AWA World belt

## SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 7)

### A PROPHECY

I'm starting to think the editors of *Inside Wrestling* are psychic. I had just finished the article on the Megapowers in the April 1989 issue ("Message To Hogan & Savage: Forget Elizabeth—Just Wrestle!") when I tuned in the February 3 telecast of *Main Event* on NBC. Sure enough, Elizabeth was in the middle of things when Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage split up for good.

But I don't blame her at all for their problems. Instead, I blame Hogan and Savage. These are two grown men, both of whom have risen to the top of their profession. You would figure that these seasoned competitors would be able to conduct themselves like adults. But there they were, arguing over Elizabeth like a couple of lovelorn 16-year-olds. Frankly, it was pretty sickening.

Elizabeth has the ball in her court



Elizabeth, Randy Savage, and Hulk Hogan have all gone through a lot of turmoil over the past few months. Reader Patty West believes it's time for Elizabeth to dump both Hogan and Savage and find another wrestler to manage.

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now. She should just dump both of these egomaniacs and go out and find herself a wrestler she can lead to the WWF World championship over both Hogan and Savage. She has suffered too much at the hands of these idiots. She's got the talent, now she just needs a *true* champion to lead to greatness!

PATTY WEST

Burke, VT

### FLAIR'S FOLLY

It looks like Ric Flair was so desperate to keep his NWA World title that he would have utilized *anybody's* help to keep it. The article in the April 1989 issue "Ric Flair's Secret Pact With The Varsity Club" clearly detailed Flair's wish to use Kevin Sullivan and the members of The Varsity Club to help him keep his precious gold around his waist.

Flair considers himself to be the greatest wrestler in the world, but I feel sorry for him now. He was only as good as those around him. When he had The Four Horsemen to back him

up, he put up a brave front, because he knew that if he got into trouble someone would run in to earn him a disqualification.

That can't happen anymore. The Four Horsemen are a thing of the past, and there was nobody to help him when Rick Steamboat took the title from him at Chi-Town Rumble '89. Hiro Matsuda is a pretty poor replacement for the cunning mind of J.J. Dillon.

First Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson left him. Then Dillon flew the coop. Now Flair stands without his NWA title.

I think it's all over for Flair. Even The Varsity Club can't help him now.

MAURY DOWD

Leroy, NY

### JARRETT'S A COMER

At 5'10" and 200 pounds, Jeff Jarrett is not the biggest man in the sport, nor is he the most experienced. But it looks as if this rising star may

(Continued on page 50)



# THIS MONTH IN...



## THE Wrestler



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5. Cut down on total fat intake from animal sources and fats and oils.
6. Avoid obesity.
7. Be moderate in consumption of alcoholic beverages.

*No one faces cancer alone.*

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## SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 48)



Although Jeff Jarrett isn't a big man by wrestling standards, he has a great deal of skill and guts, writes reader Dwayne Soper.

### MSG LOSING PRESTIGE?

Madison Square Garden in New York was once the most prestigious of all wrestling arenas. I can remember classic matches such as Antonino Rocca vs. Verne Gagne, Pedro Morales vs. Don Leo Jonathan, and Billy Graham vs. Bob Backlund, all of which took place in the venue once known as the "mecca" of the sport.

In the last five years, wrestling at Madison Square Garden has degenerated markedly, with poor performances replacing the great action of years past. The WWF must take the blame for this lack of quality. Their present stars can't even wrestle beyond 20 minutes, which is a far cry from the hour-long matches of yesteryear. Too much managerial interference has also ruined many recent cards.

I have just one comment for WWF promoter Vince McMahon: You had better start to build the state of wrestling at MSG, before crowds there start to dwindle to even fewer numbers than they have been in recent months.

It's truly a sad state of affairs.

EDGAR MEDLOCK  
Ozone Park, NY □

become a world champion someday.

Jarrett is loaded with talent. He's a fine scientific and aerial artist who reminds me a lot of Barry Windham when he first started out. Jarrett recently had a great series of matches against Eric Embry for the World Class light heavyweight championship. The youngster showed his ring knowledge by besting the veteran in some of the most exciting matches of last year.

While Jeff continues to beat top opponents, I'm sure he'll win more titles and rise to the top of the ratings. Recently, *Inside Wrestling* rated Jarrett in the top 10 of the AWA, World Class, and the CWA. To do this, a wrestler must have a lot of talent. Jeff proves himself every time he steps through the ropes.

He might not have a lot of muscle or bulk, but Jeff Jarrett has a lot of heart. That's what's making him a household name.

DWAYNE SOPER  
Medicine Hat, Alberta



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**July 1985/COLOR PINUP:** Sgt. Slaughter. **Hogan vs. Piper**, Warriors, One Man Gang, T.A., Martel.

**September 1985/COLOR PINUP:** Junkyard Dog. **Magnum T.A.**, Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

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MAY 1987

**May 1987/COLOR PINUP:** Steve Williams. **Andre-Hogan**, UWF Tourney, Albano, Cornette, Dynamite Kid, Kerry.

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## DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from page 10)

the heck is wrong with this guy? Everybody agrees that nobody can combine size and agility like Bigelow. Everybody agrees that if he puts his mind to it, Bigelow can win a world title. He came within inches of dethroning Barry Windham, a pretty damn good wrestler.

In fact, Bigelow's been cleanly pinned only a few times.



Bam Bam Bigelow has wrestled in several federations, but so far hasn't achieved the greatness predicted of him. Dave Rosenbaum thinks Bigelow is wasting his talents.

Guys like Sam Houston and Kendall Windham, who have real talent but lack the size to make an impact in the sport, must look at Bigelow and get sick.

But it's not fear that makes them sick. It's all that wasted talent.

\*\*\*

A recent item in "Kiddsey," a feature geared toward children in the Long Island newspaper *Newsday*, was of particular interest to me. The item was headlined "Who's The New King?" and dealt with ABC-TV's plans for a series based on Elvis Presley's life.

Well, ABC is looking for an unknown to play Presley, so the three Kiddsey writers decided to poll 75 seventh-graders, asking who they thought would make a good Elvis. Five choices were given, none unknown: Patrick



Could The Honky Tonk Man play Elvis Presley on TV? Some seventh-graders in New York think he can, and say he'd do a better job than any Hollywood star.

Swayze, Tony Danza, Ken Wahl, John Stamos, and The Honky Tonk Man.

The winner by a significant majority (44 votes) was Honky Tonk Man, who has obviously sung, danced, and wrestled his way into these children's hearts. "He already dresses, looks, and acts like Elvis," the story read. "He has a great sense of humor, and he'll probably beat up anyone who disagrees with him."

The writers went on to predict that the show will be a hit because many youngsters are first starting to discover Elvis' music and millions of adults already love him.

I have a prediction of my own. The idea stinks. But if they *do* get The Honky Tonk Man to play the lead, it'll be a major success.

If Hulk Hogan can make a movie, Honky Tonk Man can win an Emmy.

\*\*\*

In a more serious vein, Gulf + Western announced recently that it has scrapped plans

to build a new Madison Square Garden. That means the current Garden, built in 1967, will remain right where it is, but vast renovations will be made.

Those renovations, which include converting a large section of seats in the upper reaches of the Garden into luxury boxes, will take place over the next two summers. The Garden will be closed for those two summers. That means that, for two summers, there will be no WWF cards at the Garden.

While this is bad news for wrestling fans, it's good news for the many sports and entertainment fans in the New York area—myself included—who feel the same way about the Garden that people in the 1950s felt about Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds. When you get right down to it, some of the greatest moments in wrestling history have taken place at the present Garden.

The Garden has character, class, and history. May it stand forever. □





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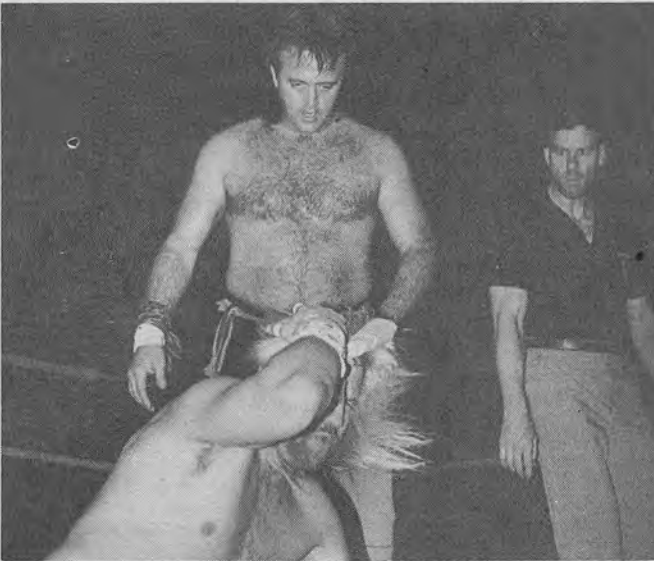
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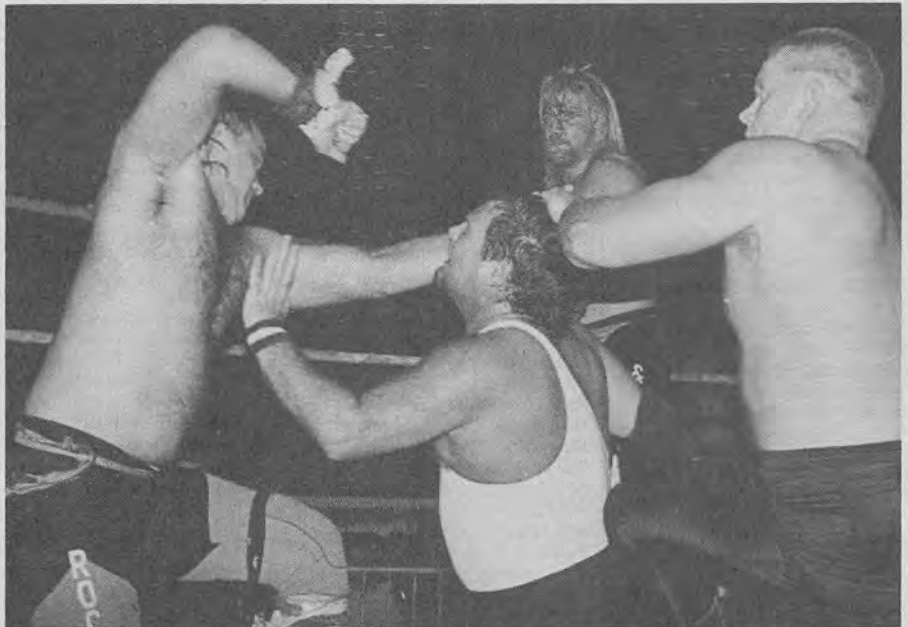
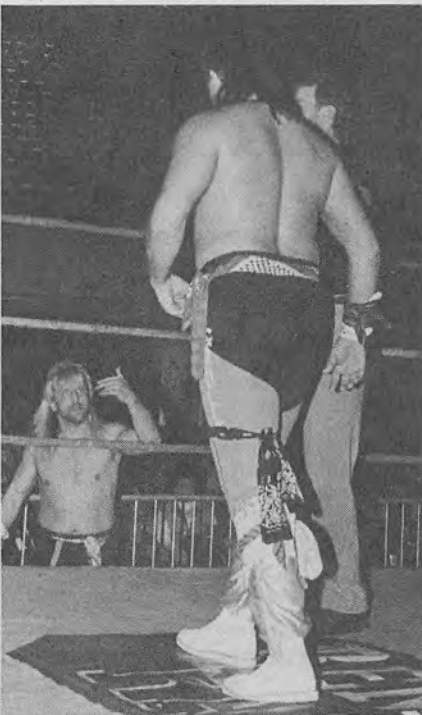
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# MORTON & GIBSON

(Continued from page 33)



Gibson looks to administer more punishment on Morton (above left). Morton ties up Gibson on the ropes so his partner, The Master of Pain, can get in some shots (above right).



After Morton beckons Gibson to join him (left), they and The Master of Pain triple-team Jerry Lawler (above). The Rock 'n' Roll Express had split up because Morton was feuding with Lawler, who now has two Rock 'n' Rollers on his tail.

Morton's statement: "You can call me a rulebreaker, but remember this: The Rock 'n' Roll Express has always gone by the books, and we've always done what's right. Lawler, on the other hand, has a history of cheating. Compare our records. He made some accusations against me that just weren't true, and I had to prove to Gibson what kind of man Lawler *really* is."

Lawler's statement: "I thought Robert Gibson was a better man

than that, but I should've realized that The Rock 'n' Roll Express comes as a team, and it was a mistake to team with Gibson. I thought maybe Gibson would knock some sense into Morton's head, but that just didn't happen. Now, as far as I'm concerned, The Rock 'n' Roll Express is public enemy number one!"

Whether Lawler is right or not depends, of course, on how fans around the country respond to

what's going on in the CWA area—if they respond at all. Ironically, Lawler is still idolized in Memphis and the rest of the CWA area, but hated in the rest of the country for his feud with Kerry Von Erich and his refusal to defend the AWA World title before it was stripped from him.

The Rock 'n' Roll Express has always been one of the most popular tag teams in the world. Right now, they're hated in Memphis for



attacking "King" Lawler. But to most fans around the country, the Rock 'n' Rolls' actions are considered proper ... especially by the Rock 'n' Rolls' enthusiastic fans.

The most interesting part of this situation is Gibson and Morton's relationship with each other. Clearly, the Rock 'n' Rolls were on shaky terms ever since Morton, acting as guest referee in an AWA World title bout between Lawler and Dutch Mantel, blatantly favored Mantel and nearly cost Lawler the belt. Only the intervention of AWA officials saved Lawler.

But the feud was underway, and Morton teamed with Mantel several times against Lawler and various partners. Lawler retaliated by signing Gibson to be his partner in the tag match against Morton and Master of Pain.

"It's not something I want to do, but I feel like I have to wrestle Ricky," Gibson said at the time. "We barely even talk anymore. Ever since Ricky got it into his head that he could be a world champion, he's had this huge ego problem. Well, that's not the Ricky Morton I know, and I'm gonna do what I can to bring him back."

In reality, Gibson didn't have any option but to wrestle his nightmare match. He knew, better than anyone else, that he and Morton had to become enemies to become friends again. After all these years, they would have to come to blows. Fortunately for them—and unfortunately for Lawler—it never happened.

"That would've been the worst thing," Morton said, "because I told Robby all along what was going on with Lawler. If we had to beat the crap out of each other just to prove a point, it would've been worth it. But let me tell ya something, The Rock 'n' Roll Express is back to normal, and we're ready to do some damage."

"That's right," Gibson added. "Rock 'n' roll is here to stay!" ☐

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## THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 16)

cannot help thinking what Rickety Steamboat is doing at this precise moment.

Tangerine drives us to the airport, where Denise, a former TWA pilot, awaits to fly us to Los Angeles in Flair's eight-passenger jet. Welcome to Ric Flair's world, a mismatched universe of materialism and sweat. I expected Flair, once aboard, to further the image with more women, champagne, and imagination. Instead, the NWA champ stripped to his boxer shorts and began a series of complicated stretches and calisthenics. At 40,000 feet, Ric Flair starts lifting weights.

Over Las Vegas, I ask if Flair recalls the beating Steamboat administered to him five years ago. "Did he win the title?" Flair asks back. "Did he ever wear the title belt?"

There is a streak of improbable pragmatism in Ric Flair. Success is not an impossible-to-measure intangible; it is easily quantified by money and title belts. No matter that Steamboat beat Flair to a bloody pulp five years ago; he didn't win the belt... *he was unsuccessful*. It recalled the unforgettable Jake LaMotta-Sugar Ray Robinson fight scene from *Raging Bull*. LaMotta, beaten, battered beyond recognition, stumbles over to Robinson's corner and spits, "You never got me down, Ray. You couldn't knock me down," as if to claim victory on some higher plane.

The shop-till-you-drop Beverly Hills matrons have nothing on Ric Flair. I view, with weakening objectivity, a grown man spend \$24,000 in an unprecedented display of power shopping. Twelve hours later we are back home. Flair is locked in his library watching match films and will not emerge for six hours. The next morning I asked Lola what time



Flair hits Rick Steamboat with a powerful chop during their NWA World title match. Despite losing, Flair is confident he'll regain the belt he held for so long.

Flair went to bed and she claimed that after he left the library he went into his gymnasium to practice some moves.

"At five in the morning?" I ask suspiciously. "What did he do, shadow box?"

"Mr. Flair has sparring partners available to him on a 24-hour basis," she says. "He often works out after coming home from a night on the town."

Dizzying consumption, compulsive training. Flair is impossible to figure out. Peg him as a playboy and he'll give you a history lesson on the evolution of the figure-four. Applaud his ring commitment and he'll go off on his mink coat collection. Who can figure?

"Why don't you go back to the Mrs. and wash dishes," Flair sings to Steamboat in his best

Muhammad Ali. "I'm gonna give you dishpan face."

The match, barely two months old, is already logged in the history books. Put it in a time capsule, along with Don Leo Jonathan-Killer Kowalski, Steamboat-Savage, and Backlund-Snuka. In defeat, Ric Flair was resurrected from the dead. For nearly 25 minutes, he and Steamboat made fans forget that the WWF has a stranglehold on the sport. They gave new NWA chieftain Ted Turner a reason to cheer, and perhaps to invest more money. They gave the performance of their lives.

"Maybe we shouldn't have gone shopping," I said to Flair as he left the arena without the title belt. "Maybe you should have trained harder."

"I only train one way," he smiled. "Don't worry, I'll be right back. I'll always be right back." □



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 May 1984/LeDuc-Sawyer, Assassins, The Men Who Make Wrestling Fly!  
 June 1984/Windham-Flair, Gilbert, Sawyer, Bockwinkel, Tsuruta.  
 July 1984/Flair-Gordy, Duggan, Blanchard, Brisco, AWA tag tourney.  
 August 1984/Rich & Gilbert, Adams-Hayes, Von Erich, Faces Of Wrestling.  
 September 1984/Flair-Steamboat, Freebirds-Von Erichs—Special coverage of two big cards.  
 October 1984/Sullivan-Rhodes, Freebirds video, Atlas, Orange Bowl card.  
 November 1984/Von Erich & Billy Jack, Andre, Fab Ones, Summer Wars!  
 December 1984/Rich-Gilbert, Martel, Mascaras, Youngblood, World Class.  
 January 1985/Flair-McDaniel, Missing Link, Backlund, Fabulous Ones, Pro Wrestling USA, Valentine.  
 February 1985/Sullivan-Graham, Hernandez & Nicola Roberts, Bruno Jr., Steamboat, Warriors.  
 March 1985/Starrcade '84 featuring Flair, Rhodes, Steamboat, Koloffs, 1985 Datebook, Hayes, wrestling school.  
 April 1985/Von Erich-Blackwell, Haynes-Barr, Hart, Irwins, 1984 in Pictures, Blair.  
 May 1985/Albano, Freebirds-Flair, Steamboat, Hernandez, Las Vegas.  
 June 1985/Pro Wrestling U.S.A., Von Erich, Richter, Windham, Taylor.  
 July 1985/Von Erich, WrestleMania, bloodiest matches, Backlund, Snuka.  
 August 1985/Flair-Nikita, Orndorff, Slaughter, Parade of Champions II.  
 September 1985/Adams-Von Erich, Orndorff, Sawyer, Kamala, Barr.  
 October 1985/Martel-Hayes, Richter, Savage, Adams, T.A., Warriors.  
 November 1985/Freebirds-Warriors, Mid-South, Haynes, Rhodes, Savage.

December 1985/Hogan, Zbyszko-Martel, Murdoch, Dillon, fiendish faces.  
 January 1986/Savage-Santana, Abdullah, Humongous, Von Raschke, Comiskey Park, Taylor.  
 February 1986/Junkyard Dog, Rude, Patrick, Garvin, Reed, Datebook.  
 March 1986/Starrcade '85, Ventura, Windham, Sunshine, Slaughter.  
 April 1986/Savage-Hogan, Martel-Hansen, 1985 in Pictures, Warriors, DiBiase.  
 May 1986/Sammartino, R&R Express, Sunshine-Hyatt, Slater, Devastating Holds, Hall & Hennig.  
 June 1986/Hogan-Muraco, Midnight Express, Freebirds, Battle of Belts II.  
 July 1986/Orndorff-Piper, Blanchard-T.A., Matches of '80s, Shepherders, Bockwinkel, Bulldogs.  
 August 1986/Crockett Cup Tourney, Jake Roberts, Midnight Rockers, Von Erichs, Wrestling II.  
 September 1986/Bulldogs, Blanchard-Gibson, Luger, Dundee, UWF tourney.  
 October 1986/Orndorff, Rude-Brody, Bash, Bockwinkel, Gordy, Adams.  
 November 1986/Andersons-R&R Express, Machine, Gordy, Managers.  
 December 1986/Machines, Fantastics, Warriors, WWF Muchnick Tourney.  
 January 1987/Russians, Hyatt-Dark Journey, WWF Top 50, Fab Ones.  
 February 1987/Road Warriors, Savage, Windham & Luger, 1987 Datebook.  
 March 1987/Kamala-Hogan, Starrcade '86, Atlas, Williams, Tatum.  
 April 1987/1986 in Pictures, Kevin Von Flair, Rich, Hennig-Bockwinkel.  
 May 1987/Nikita-Flair, Bulldogs, Albano's career, Snuka-DeBeers, Taylor.  
 June 1987/Hogan-Andre, Hall, Parsons, Garvin, WWF title history.  
 July 1987/Midnight Express, Savage-Steamboat, Adams, NWA in Boston.  
 August 1987/Nord-Kevin, Armstrong-Flair, Hogan & Patera, Crockett Cup.  
 September 1987/Hogan, Akbar, Luger-Nikita, Summer Feuds, charity shows.  
 October 1987/Windham, Bigelow, Bockwinkel, Western States tourney.  
 November 1987/Bash, Honky Tonk, Hart, Shepherders, Condrey.  
 December 1987/Grappling Ghouls, Hogan-Andre, Luger-Nikita, Boesch card

January 1988/Honky Tonk, Garvin, T.A. career, Arcidi, Hogan.  
 February 1988/Rhodes, Strike Force, Rich-Adonis, Hyatt, 1988 datebook.  
 March 1988/Starrcade, Survivor Series, Simpson, Hennig, Zbyszko.  
 April 1988/1987 in Pictures, Tully & Arn, DiBiase, Kerry, Orton.  
 May 1988/Hawk-Flair, Andre-Hogan, Dangerously, Duggan, Mike George.  
 June 1988/Luger-Tully, DiBiase, Adams, NWA New York invasion.  
 July 1988/Savage wins WWF tourney, Rockers-Express, Hayes, Dusty-Rider.  
 August 1988/Luger and Sting win Crockett Cup, Savage-DiBiase, Nasty Boys, Ultimate Warrior.  
 September 1988/Predictions Through 1998, Williams, Rhodes, Bad Company, greatest Garden matches.  
 October 1988/Midnight Rockers, Sting, Taylor, Koloff, Hot Young Lions.  
 November 1988/R&R Express, Honky Tonk, Von Erichs, Great American Bash.  
 December 1988/Warriors, Samoan SWAT Team, Hart, Andre, Presidential Wrestlers.  
 January 1989/Jake-Cheryl-Rude, Sting, Lawler, Flair, Savage's career.  
 February 1989/The Champions in '89, Duggan, Roberts, 1989 datebook.  
 April 1989/Starrcade '88, Savage-Hogan, Funk-Mulligan, Heenan, Abdullah.  
 May 1989/Royal Rumble, WrestleMania, Rhodes, Lawler, Horsemen.

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# STEAMBOAT VS. FLAIR

(Continued from page 35)

With 22 minutes expired, Steamboat leapt off the top rope and onto Flair, who inadvertently crashed into Young and knocked him out. Steamboat covered Flair for the pin, but then realized there was no referee making the count and frantically tried to revive Young. The champion was dazed, but he had enough presence of mind to grab Steamboat by the trunks and cradle him for another uncounded pin.



Flair then lifted Steamboat, raked his eyes, and threw him out of the ring. Steamboat, however, grabbed the top rope and managed to lift himself back up onto the apron, while Flair and Long attempted to revive Young.

As Flair turned his attention back to the ring, Steamboat leapt off the top rope in an attempt to catch the champ off guard. The champ moved out of the way and Steamboat crashed to the mat in pain. Flair was now in control and apparently ready to put away "The Dragon." But as he proceeded to apply a figure-four leg-lock, Steamboat flipped him over and cradled him for the pin. Long bounded into the ring and made the three-count, igniting a wild celebration from the crowd . . . and tears of joy from Steamboat's face.

"Where's my wife and son?"



Steamboat chops Flair in the chest (left) and bridges up out of a pinning position (above). Both "The Dragon" and Flair wrestled brilliantly, but in the end Steamboat proved he was the better man that night.

Steamboat shouted into the microphone in a scene reminiscent of the last moments of the movie *Rocky*, when Rocky Balboa—bathed in sweat and blood—searched the crowd for his wife. But there was a difference: Balboa lost, and Steamboat won. The picture of Steamboat cradling his young son was not one to be forgotten.

"I've had great moments in my life and my career, but next to the day Bonnie and I got married and the day little Ricky was born, this is the greatest," said Steamboat as he stood in front of his locker and addressed the large press contingent on hand from around the world. "I have a lot of respect for Ric Flair as an athlete, and that's why this victory means even more. You know, I've seen Flair do a lot of rotten things in his day, but tonight he wrestled like a man. If this makes me the best wrestler in the world, he's second best."

On the other side of the building, Flair was consoled by the fact that he had wrestled in one of the greatest world title matches of all time.

"What do you mean *one* of the best?" Flair said. "This was the

best. I'm proud to say that I was a part of it, and Rick Steamboat, you're one of the greatest wrestlers I've ever faced. I hope you defend that belt with honor, but let me tell you something: I just want to see you do that again. A lot of other people have pinned me once, but they've never been able to do it a second time. I still am the greatest NWA World champion of all time, and don't you forget it!"

How appropriate, then, that the man who might be the greatest NWA champion of all time wrestled in one of the greatest title matches ever. There have been longer bouts—this one lasted only 23 minutes six seconds—but none more entertaining, exciting, or emotionally exhausting for the wrestlers *and* the fans.

In fact, it took only 21 seconds for Steamboat to football-tackle Flair and cover him for the first two-count of the match; there would be many more. Only 38 seconds later, Steamboat sunset-flipped Flair for another two-count, forcing the champ to go into a stall. Then Flair reentered the ring and gained the momentum. Three times within a 30-second period, Steamboat's shoulders were



pressed to the mat, but he came back again. And again. And yet again.

That's the way it went all night. "I've never seen the momentum switch so many times in one match," Steamboat said. "It's almost like there wasn't any such thing as momentum in this match, because nobody had the advantage long enough. This match was everything I had hoped it would be. I wanted to come back and wrestle a great match against Flair, and he was certainly up to it."



Flair watches dejectedly as Steamboat is awarded the title belt. Flair defies Steamboat to defend the championship over a long period of time.

The win ended 13 years of frustration for Steamboat, who hadn't wrestled for a world title since he lost a controversial decision to Flair on May 29, 1984, at New Jersey's Byrne Meadowlands Arena in the bout the fans voted third runner-up for Match of the Year. His stint in the WWF was disappointing. It took him nearly two years to win the Intercontinental title, but only two months for him to lose it to the vastly inferior Honky Tonk Man. He left the federation having never wrestled for the World title.

Now, less than one year after he had announced his retirement from wrestling, Rick Steamboat is living his dream.

Luck, it seems, is finally walking with "The Dragon." □

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## ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 18)



Steamboat spends every morning in the gym, even after winning the title. Hunter admires his devotion and is glad he's a role model for the nation's youth.

costs lifestyle all rub the traditionally valued Steamboat the wrong way.

"As a professional wrestler, I have nothing but the utmost respect for Ric Flair," Steamboat says. "Even with all the furor over his disqualifications, I know that he's a tremendous talent. Out of the ring is where he and I run into problems. He's a poor role model for the millions of children who follow wrestling, but that's beyond my control. It's his life and he's welcome to it. But to involve my family and dishonor them with his brash, insensitive comments . . . I just can't accept that."

I remembered what he was talking about. It was at Clash of the Champions V just three days earlier. Flair was introduced to the Cleveland crowd for an interview with Bob Caudle. He came strut-

ting into the ring wearing a \$1,500 suit, accompanied by five harlots who look like they stepped directly out of a Vargas centerfold. Somehow, Flair manages to be totally sexist and totally alluring at the same time.

Flair began to insult Steamboat about his family image. Predictably, Steamboat came to the ring to respond to Flair's callous comments. Instantly, a battle broke out. Steamboat managed to strip Flair down to his designer briefs (which was more than enough to raise my body temperature above the boiling point), and the pair exchanged brutal chops around the ring and even into the crowd. When the smoke cleared, Flair and his pinup bimbos traipsed back to the dressing room. Steamboat returned to the ring and basked in his moral victory—



Maybe Flair was the right man to be NWA champion all along. ☐

## 61

## SPECIAL FAN BALLOT

(Continued from page 37)

In other words, there was more than one way to look at the February 3 incident between the "Hulkster" and the "Macho Man." Savage wasn't necessarily to blame, even though he didn't help Elizabeth. And Hogan wasn't necessarily right, even though he apparently acted in Elizabeth's best interests and later rallied to win the match. Maybe Savage had every right to attack Hogan. The tone of the mail we've received certainly supports that outlook in many ways.

But we're looking for more than a sampling of mail to see where public opinion lies. Those who write letters to *Inside Wrestling* and its sister publications comprise a small percentage of our readership. Live crowds are not always an accurate indication of how the majority of the public feels, either.

We want to know who has your sentiments in this titantic battle between Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage. Forget about who is the better *wrestler*. Forget about the results of WrestleMania V. We want to know which *really* rules your heart: Hulkamania or Macho Madness.

Fill out the ballot that accompanies this article and mail it in, but do so quickly: The deadline for ballots is April 30. We'll count 'em up and, in the August issue of *Inside Wrestling*, we'll declare whether Hulkamania or Macho Madness rules the WWF. And remember, not only will you be helping us judge public opinion on this important matter, but you'll be supporting your favorite wrestler.

For those who can't decide where their sentiments lie, here's a short voting guide:

If you support "Macho Madness" you ...

... think Hulk Hogan lusts after Elizabeth. On appearance, Hogan

does lust after Elizabeth. He appears to be very close to her and often asks her to kiss him. He was also adamant about making Elizabeth his manager, and is always the first one to lift her after winning a match. And we all saw the look on Hogan's face when Elizabeth was in the first-aid room. Wasn't that a look of love?

... think Hogan is an extremely selfish man who never really cared about Savage. After all, how many times has Hogan stolen the spotlight from Savage af-

ter a big match? And every time Savage scores a big victory, isn't Hogan there? Isn't he always posing in the ring, even when Savage is the *real* hero?

... think Hogan had no right to desert Savage in Milwaukee. After all, Savage was brutally double-teamed by Big Bossman and Akeem after Hogan took Elizabeth back to the dressing room area. Savage could have been seriously injured, and only his own magnificent abilities kept him from at least getting pinned. Hogan sim-



Savage parades around the ring with Elizabeth on his shoulder (above left). Hogan commands the respect and admiration of his fans (above right).

Mail ballot to: **Hulkamania or Macho Madness?**

***Inside Wrestling***

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( )Hulkamania rules!

( )Macho Madness rules!

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Additional comments welcome! All ballots must be received by April 30 in order to be included in the special results issue of *Inside Wrestling*, cover-dated August 1989 and on sale June 13.



ply forgot that the wrestling match was more important than anything else.

But if you like Hogan, you . . . know that Hogan is married with a young daughter and is merely good friends with Elizabeth. He said so himself! "I love Elizabeth like a sister" Hogan told Brother Love, and we all know the "Hulkster" doesn't lie. Also, when Hogan took Elizabeth back to the first-aid room, he would have stayed with her if he were romantically in love. Instead, as soon as Elizabeth recovered, he hurried back to help Savage.

. . . think Hogan is very unselfish. How many times has he put his body on the line to save Savage? And would Savage ever have won the belt at WrestleMania IV without Hogan's help? With little to gain except friendship, Hogan has always been there for the "Macho Man." That's not selfishness, it's friendship. The selfish one is Savage, who never showed any concern after Elizabeth was hurt.

. . . believe that Elizabeth's health was in danger and someone had to help her. Savage, not Hogan, should have taken Elizabeth back to the dressing room. That would have left Hogan alone in the ring, and he certainly wouldn't have complained. Hogan just did what he thought had to be done.

Most important, however, is which attitude you agree with.

Savage is a wild animal who has brought more excitement to the WWF than any other wrestler over the past five years. You can't be blamed for being caught up in Macho Madness.

Hogan, on the other hand, appeals to good, clean living: saying your prayers, eating right, and taking your vitamins. Hulkamania is a way of life.

So which one rules, fans, Hulkamania or Macho Madness? It's time to make your voices heard!

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## TOP 15

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WWF World champion
- 2—**RICK STEAMBOAT**  
NWA World champion
- 3—**RIC FLAIR**  
No. 2 contender: NWA title

- 4—**HULK HOGAN**  
No. 2 contender: WWF title
- 5—**LEX LUGER**  
U.S. champion
- 6—**ULTIMATE WARRIOR**  
WWF Intercontinental champ
- 7—**BARRY WINDHAM**  
No. 1 contender: U.S. title

- 8—**STING**  
No. 3 contender: NWA title
- 9—**JERRY LAWLER**  
World Class champion
- 10—**LARRY ZBYSZKO**  
AWA World title
- 11—**MIKE ROTUNDO**  
NWA TV champion

- 12—**RICK STEINER**  
No. 1 contender: NWA TV title
- 13—**DUTCH MANTEL**  
CWA champion
- 14—**TOM PRICHARD**  
CWF champion
- 15—**BRICKHOUSE BROWN**  
WCCW Texas champion

## NWA

- 1—**RICK STEAMBOAT**  
238, Honolulu, HI
- 2—**LEX LUGER**  
268, Chicago, IL
- 3—**RIC FLAIR**  
243, Minneapolis, MN

- 4—**BARRY WINDHAM**  
263, Sweetwater, TX
- 5—**STING**  
260, Venice Beach, CA
- 6—**MIKE ROTUNDO**  
245, Syracuse, NY
- 7—**RICK STEINER**  
248, Detroit, MI

- 8—**JUNKYARD DOG**  
305, Charlotte, NC
- 9—**BUTCH REED**  
265, Kansas City, MO
- 10—**EDDIE GILBERT**  
222, Lexington, TN
- 11—**MICHAEL HAYES**  
255, Marietta, GA

- 12—**RON SIMMONS**  
260, Perry, GA
- 13—**DAN SPIVEY**  
300, Tampa, FL
- 14—**THE IRON SHEIK**  
263, Teheran, Iran
- 15—**ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER**  
360, Khartoum, Sudan

## AWA

- 1—**LARRY ZBYSZKO**  
248, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2—**GREG GAGNE**  
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 3—**SGT. SLAUGHTER**  
310, Parris Island, SC

- 4—**TOM ZENK**  
237, Minneapolis, MN
- 5—**MANNY FERNANDEZ**  
245, El Paso, TX
- 6—**WAHOO McDANIEL**  
280, Midland, TX
- 7—**KEN PATERA**  
256, Portland, OR

- 8—**COL. DeBEERS**  
248, Cape Town, S. Africa
- 9—**DERRICK DUKES**  
232, Boston, MA
- 10—**MANDO GUERRERO**  
225, Mexico City, Mexico
- 11—**SHANE DOUGLAS**  
223, Pittsburgh, PA

- 12—**CHAVO GUERRERO**  
230, Mexico City, Mexico
- 13—**PAT TANAKA**  
265, Tokyo, Japan
- 14—**PAUL DIAMOND**  
230, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- 15—**RICKY RICE**  
230, Medina, MN

## WWF

- 1—**RANDY SAVAGE**  
245, Sarasota, FL
- 2—**ULTIMATE WARRIOR**  
280, Queens, NY
- 3—**HULK HOGAN**  
302, Venice Beach, CA

- 4—**BIG BOSSMAN**  
348, Cobb County, GA
- 5—**BAD NEWS BROWN**  
280, New York, NY
- 6—**TED DIBIASE**  
247, Omaha, NE
- 7—**AKEEM**  
468, Chicago, IL

- 8—**ANDRE THE GIANT**  
497, Grenoble, France
- 9—**HACKSAW DUGGAN**  
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 10—**CURT HENNIG**  
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 11—**RICK RUDE**  
246, Robbinsdale, MN

- 12—**RON BASS**  
285, Pampa, TX
- 13—**TERRY TAYLOR**  
225, Vero Beach, FL
- 14—**KING HAKU**  
270, Tonga
- 15—**JAKE ROBERTS**  
246, Stone Mountain, GA

## MOST POPULAR

- 1—**HULK HOGAN**  
Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2—**RICK STEAMBOAT**  
Last month: No. 7 Most Popular
- 3—**ULTIMATE WARRIOR**  
Last month: No. 4 Most Popular

- 4—**STING**  
Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
- 5—**LEX LUGER**  
Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
- 6—**RICK STEINER**  
Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
- 7—**JAKE ROBERTS**  
Last month: unrated

- 8—**MICHAEL HAYES**  
Last month: unrated
- 9—**JEFF JARRETT**  
Last month: No. 12 Most Popular
- 10—**DUSTY RHODES**  
Last month: No. 9 Most Popular
- 11—**SGT. SLAUGHTER**  
Last month: No. 14 Most Popular

- 12—**KERRY VON ERICH**  
Last month: No. 10 Most Popular
- 13—**BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**  
Last month: unrated
- 14—**JERRY LAWLER**  
Last month: No. 11 Most Hated
- 15—**DON MURACO**  
Last month: unrated

## MOST HATED

- 1—**RANDY SAVAGE**  
Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
- 2—**RIC FLAIR**  
Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3—**BIG BOSSMAN**  
Last month: No. 1 Most Hated

- 4—**BARRY WINDHAM**  
Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
- 5—**AKEEM**  
Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
- 6—**ANDRE THE GIANT**  
Last month: No. 5 Most Hated
- 7—**MIKE ROTUNDO**  
Last month: No. 6 Most Hated

- 8—**RICK RUDE**  
Last month: No. 13 Most Hated
- 9—**LARRY ZBYSZKO**  
Last month: unrated
- 10—**KEVIN SULLIVAN**  
Last month: unrated
- 11—**TED DIBIASE**  
Last month: unrated

- 12—**AL PEREZ**  
Last month: unrated
- 13—**DUTCH MANTEL**  
Last month: unrated
- 14—**JOHNNY SMITH**  
Last month: unrated
- 15—**TOM PRICHARD**  
Last month: unrated

## TAG TEAMS

- 1—**THE ROAD WARRIORS**  
NWA World tag team champions
- 2—**DEMOLITION**  
WWF World tag team champions
- 3—**WARLORD & BARBARIAN**  
No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 4—**STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON**  
No. 2 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 5—**PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND**  
AWA World tag team champions

- 6—**ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN**  
WCCW & CWA tag team champions
- 7—**RICK STEINER & EDDIE GILBERT**  
U.S. tag team champions
- 8—**THE SAMOAN SWAT TEAM**  
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 9—**TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON**  
No. 3 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 10—**KERRY & KEVIN VON ERICH**  
No. 1 contenders: WCCW tag team title

- 11—**JOHNNY ACE & THE TERMINATOR**  
FCW tag team champions
- 12—**STEVE WILLIAMS & KEVIN SULLIVAN**  
No. 1 contender: U.S. tag team title
- 13—**VULKAN & MAKHAN SINGH**  
Stampede tag team champions
- 14—**JACQUES & RAYMOND ROUGEAU**  
No. 4 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 15—**JOHNNY & DAVEY RICH**  
CWF tag team champions



These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler . . . "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices . . . Championships marked with asterisks on the "Roll Call of Champions" indicate title changes that have taken place since our previous issue . . . The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place .

For period ended March 3, 1989

# ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

## ALL-CALIFORNIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING CHAMPION:

**CHAVO GUERRERO**

(September 23, 1988; from Jack Armstrong; Lancaster, CA)

## ALL-CALIFORNIA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**PETER MAIVIA JR. & MANDO GUERRERO**

(September 24, 1988; from The Lords of Discipline; Victorville, CA)

## ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**TOSHIKI KAWADA & SAMPSON FUYUKI**

(September 15, 1988; from Shinichi Nakano & Shunji Cakano; Tokyo, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA

(April 14, 1988; from Bruiser Brody; Sendai, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**STAN HANSEN & TERRY GORDY**

(December 16, 1988; tournament final over Genichiro Tenryu & Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MIGHTY INOUE

(January 25, 1989; from Joe Malenko; Osaka, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN

(July 27, 1988; from Genichiro Tenryu; Nagano, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: LIONESS ASUKA

(January 29, 1989; over Chigusa Nagayo; Tokyo, Japan)

## ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: MIKA KOMATSU

(July 10, 1988; from Yumi Ogura; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

## ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**MIKA KOMATSU & YUMI OGURA**

(August 25, 1988; from Yumiko Hotta & Mitsuko Nishiwaki; Kawasaki, Japan)

## AWA TV CHAMPION: GREG GAGNE

(December 13, 1988; from Ron Garvin; Chicago, IL)

## AWA WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: WENDI RICHTER

(November 26, 1988; from Madusa Miceli; Bloomington, MN)

## \* AWA WORLD CHAMPION: LARRY ZBYSKO

(February 7, 1989; battle royal victory to fill vacant title; St. Paul, MN)

## AWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND

(March 19, 1988; from The Midnight Rockers; Las Vegas, NV)

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH CHAMPION: CHRIS BENOIT

(January 13, 1989; from Johnny Smith; Calgary, Alberta)

## CONTINENTAL HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TOM PRICHARD

(October 3, 1988; tournament final over Tony Anthony; Birmingham, AL)

## \* CONTINENTAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JOHNNY & DAVEY RICH

(February 17, 1989; from Jerry Stubbs & Tony Anthony; Knoxville, TN)

## CONTINENTAL U.S. JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN DAVIS

(November 2, 1988; from Ken Wayne; Harriman, TN)

## CWA CHAMPION: DUTCH MANTEL

(January 24, 1989; from Wendell Cooley; Stanton, KY)

## \* CWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN

(February 25, 1989; from Jed Grundy & Scott Steiner; Memphis, TN)

## FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING CHAMPION: MIKE GRAHAM

(December 25, 1988; from The Terminator; Tampa, FL)

## FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:

**JIM BACKLUND**

(December 10, 1988; from Tyree Pride; Tampa, FL)

## FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**JOHNNY ACE & THE TERMINATOR**

(January 26, 1989; from The Nasty Boys; Tampa, FL)

## \* INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING CHAMPION:

**TONY ATLAS**

(February 11, 1989; from Joe Savoldi; Presque Isle, ME)

## IWGP CHAMPION: TATSUMI FUJINAMI

(June 24, 1988; over Riki Choshu; Osaka, Japan)

## IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**MASA SAITO & RIKI CHOSHU**

(June 10, 1988; from Tatsumi Fujinami & Kengo Kimura; Hiroshima, Japan)

## IWGP JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHIRO KOSHINAKA

(June 24, 1988; from Owen Hart; Osaka, Japan)

## NWA SIX-MAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**THE ROAD WARRIORS & GENICHIRO TENRYU**

(December 7, 1988; via Animal's victory over Dusty Rhodes; Chattanooga, TN)

## \* NWA TV CHAMPION: MIKE ROTUNDO

(February 20, 1989; from Rick Steiner; Chicago, IL)

## \* NWA WORLD CHAMPION: RICK STEAMBOAT

(February 20, 1989; from Ric Flair; Chicago, IL)

## NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROAD WARRIORS

(October 29, 1988; from The Midnight Express; New Orleans, LA)

## NATIONAL WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: JULES STRONGBOW

(by NWF officials' decision)

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAMPION: THE GRAPPLER

(January 28, 1989; from Top Gun; Portland, OR)

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**BUDDY ROSE & COL. DEBEERS**

(January 28, 1989; from Steve Doll & Scott Petersen; Portland, OR)

## PWF CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN

(July 27, 1988; from Genichiro Tenryu; Nagano, Japan)

## PWF INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**JUMBO TSURUTA & YOSHIKI YATSU**

(February 2, 1988; from Stan Hansen & Terry Gordy; Kansas City, KS)

## STAMPEDE NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Don Muraco)

## STAMPEDE INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**MAKHAN & VULCAN SINGH**

(December 30, 1988; from The British Bulldogs; Calgary, Alberta)

## \* U.S. CHAMPION: LEX LUGER

(February 20, 1989; from Barry Windham; Chicago, IL)

## \* U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: EDDIE GILBERT & RICK STEINER

(February 28, 1989; from Kevin Sullivan & Steve Williams; Columbia, SC)

## WORLD CLASS CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER

(December 13, 1988; from Kerry Von Erich; Chicago, IL)

## WORLD CLASS LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ERIC EMBRY

(January 14, 1989; from Cactus Jack; Dallas, TX)

## \* WORLD CLASS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN**

(February 17, 1989; from Kerry & Kevin Von Erich; Dallas, TX)

## \* WORLD CLASS TEXAS CHAMPION: BRICKHOUSE BROWN

(February 3, 1989; from Iceman Parsons; Dallas, TX)

## WWC CARIBBEAN CHAMPION: JASON THE TERRIBLE

(November 19, 1988; from TNT; Carolina, Puerto Rico)

## WWC CARIBBEAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

**MIGUEL PEREZ JR. & HURRICANE CASTILLO JR.**

(October 15, 1988; from Bobby Jagers & Dan Kroffat; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

## WWC JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RICKY SANTANA

(January 14, 1989; from El Prophet; Caguas, Puerto Rico)

## WWC NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER

(January 30, 1988; from Miguel Perez Jr.; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

## \* WWC PUERTO RICAN CHAMPION: TNT

(February 4, 1989; tournament final over Sika; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

## WWC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DAN KROFFAT & ISLANDER TAMA

(January 6, 1989; from Brad & Bart Batten; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

## WWC UNIVERSAL CHAMPION: CARLOS COLON

(December 18, 1988; from Ronnie Garvin; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

## WWC WOMEN'S CHAMPION: WENDI RICHTER

(July 28, 1987; from Monster Ripper; Trinidad, West Indies)

## WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR

(August 29, 1988; from The Honky Tonk Man; New York, NY)

## WWF WORLD CHAMPION: RANDY SAVAGE

(March 27, 1988; tournament final over Ted DiBiase; Atlantic City, NJ)

## WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DEMOLITION

(March 27, 1988; from Rick Martel & Tito Santana; Atlantic City, NJ)

## WWF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: ROCKIN' ROBIN

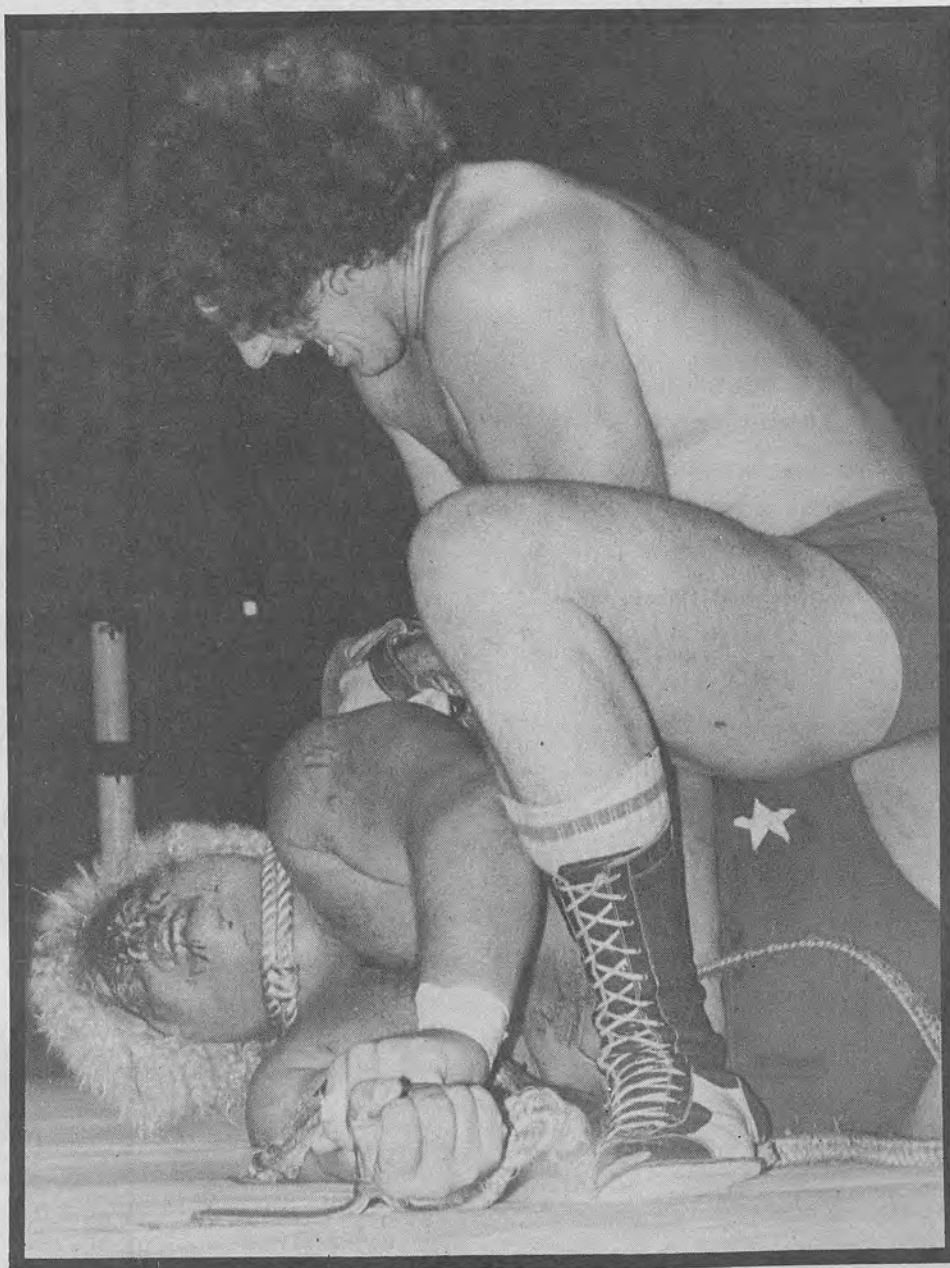
(October 7, 1988; from Sherri Martel; Paris, France)

## WWF WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: LELANI KAI & JUDY MARTIN

(June 8, 1988; from The Jumping Bomb Angels; Omiya City, Japan)

# ***Blast From The Past*** ***This Month In Wrestling History***

## **“BLOODFEST AT THE BAYFRONT”**



## **TERRY FUNK vs. DUSTY RHODES**

**April 1976**

For years, Dusty Rhodes lusted after the NWA World championship. He figured he would be granted title matches when Terry Funk, then one of his most hated enemies, won the title in 1974. Instead, Funk tried to dodge Rhodes for more than a year—until they locked up in this controversial non-title Texas bullrope match at the Bayfront Center in St. Petersburg, Florida. Rhodes' stunning victory in this horrifyingly bloody match finally earned him some title shots, but it wouldn't be until 1979 that the "American Dream" would finally capture the NWA championship—from Harley Race in Daytona, Florida.



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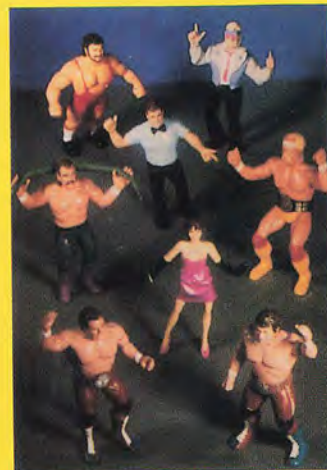
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